DH
DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Indian cricketers dominate Wisden Almanack honours

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Hippopotamus 'Hamsini' dies in Shivamogga zoo

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Mamata didi & Humayun Kabir should listen to me carefully. This is Bharat, and no man worth his salt can build a Babri Masjid here
Political Theatre
The BJP has snatched everything from you ... Voting against it would be your only way to take revenge

DECCAN HERALD
Wednesday
April 15, 2026

Poll vault

Virtual Vijay

Leveraging technology, a candidate of the Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) is using a full hologram image of party chief and actor Vijay to reach voters. R Vinoth, who is entering the fray from Kumbakonam, is deploying the hologram to project Vijay's speech, in which he seeks votes for all TVK candidates. With Vijay unable to campaign in all constituencies, TVK candidates are coming up with innovative ideas to connect with voters.

E T B SIVAPRIYAN, CHENNAI

Meet the leader

Premalatha Vijayakanth
DMDK
Vriddhachalam

Premalatha stepped out of the shadows of her husband, actor-politician Vijayakanth, during the 2021 Assembly elections when he was confined to his home due to health complications. The 57-year-old lost from Vriddhachalam, the constituency her husband had won in 2006, just a year after launching the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK).

She formally took over as the general secretary of the now 21-year-old DMDK in December 2023, a fortnight before Vijayakanth's death.

With the DMDK facing an existential crisis after his passing, Premalatha allied with the AIADMK for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, but the party lost all five constituencies it contested, securing just over 2% of the vote share.

Following the setback, she severed ties with the AIADMK after it declined to allot the party a Rajya Sabha berth in 2025, and joined the DMK alliance.

While securing 10 Assembly seats, Premalatha also ensured that her brother, LK Sudeesh, was elected to the Rajya Sabha, fulfilling a long-held ambition, with the DMK's support.

An engaging speaker, Premalatha is emerging as an asset to the DMK alliance, becoming one of the ruling combine's star campaigners.

Over the years, the DMDK has come to be seen as an unreliable ally due to its steep seat demands, despite failing to win any seats since 2016 and seeing its vote share decline from 10.5% in 2009 to about 1%.

She is contesting again from Vriddhachalam, while her son is in the fray from Virudhunagar, drawing criticism that she is focused on promoting her family.

Premalatha faces a crucial test in this election: to ensure DMDK legislators return to the Assembly after a decade and keep the party afloat.

Trivia

For the first time since 1956, when states in India were reorganised on a linguistic basis, the 2006 Assembly elections resulted in a hung House, with no party reaching the majority mark of 118 seats on its own. The DMK emerged as the single largest party, winning 96 seats, while its alliance's tally stood at 163. The AIADMK secured 61 seats, with its allies adding eight more. Though the DMK fell 22 seats short of a majority, it went on to form the government with outside support from allies such as the Congress, which had won 34 seats. Actor Vijayakanth's DMDK won just one seat but registered an impressive 8% vote share, often cited as a key reason the DMK fell short of a majority.

BJP-TMC tug-of-war intensifies amid shifting Rajbanshi loyalties

Two estranged leaders cross paths again, reshaping caste equations and political alignments

FROM THE GROUND

SUMIT PANDE
COOCH BEHAR, DHNS

The presence of two friends-turned-foes, who have shaped the electoral politics of West Bengal's largest Dalit group, at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cooch Behar rally earlier this month has created ripples in North Bengal.

It is important to look back to understand the context of Rajbanshi leaders Anant Maharaj and Bangshi Badan Barman's "reunion" after a long estrangement, and its implications for the region's 50-odd seats.

The unmistakable European Renaissance-style architecture in the middle of an otherwise sleepy North Bengal town is visible from a distance. The Cooch Behar Palace, or Rajbari, spread over 50,000 square feet, was built by the Koch dynasty, which once ruled a vast stretch from Northeast Bihar to Assam.

Maharani Gayatri Devi, a staunch critic of former prime minister Indira Gandhi, was born and brought up in this palace before marrying into the Jaipur royal family. That's the closest anyone in the Koch dynasty has ventured into politics after Independence.

The kings and queens are long gone. In democratic India, a social group that traces its lineage to the Koch royalty and constitutes the largest Scheduled Caste bloc in West Bengal now shapes the region's trajectory of power politics.

The Rajbanshis of North Bengal crystallised into one homogenous caste group over more than a century. This consolidation was initiated by reformers seeking upward social mobility after the British introduced caste enumeration in the 1881 Census. In West Bengal, Rajbanshis were eventually deemed a Scheduled Caste.

Cooch Behar Palace or Rajbari. DH PHOTO

WEST BENGAL
Assembly Poll

They account for nearly 18% of the state's electorate. Unlike the other dominant Dalit group, the Nama Sudras or Matua Hindus, many of whom migrated from Bangladesh, the Rajbanshis are concentrated in North Bengal. In Cooch Behar, they constitute about one-third of the electorate, while Nama Sudras make up close to 20%.

The Left Front in the 1960s was quick to decipher the demography of the region. The CPM's ally, the Forward Bloc, won the Cooch Behar Lok Sabha seat 11 times between 1967 and 2014. Its local strongman, Amar Roy Pradhan, was a Rajbanshi.

The Trinamool Congress breached this seemingly impregnable red fortress in 2014. A key figure in that shift was Bangshi Badan Barman, a leader of the Greater Cooch Behar People's Association, which had demanded a separate Kamatapur state for North Bengal. Incarcerated in 2005, he was released by the Mamata Banerjee government in 2011 and later appointed chairman of the Rajbanshi Development and Cultural Board and the Rajbanshi Bhasha Academy.

Meanwhile, Nagendra Roy, better known as Anant Maharaj, once a close aide of Barman and a fellow campaigner in the statehood movement, drifted away after Barman's arrest in 2005. He moved closer to the BJP and eventually secured a Rajya Sabha berth.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won the Cooch Behar seat for the first time. Two years later, in the Assembly elections, the party swept seven of the nine seats in the district.

With the sounding of the election bugle last month, the two influential Rajbanshi leaders seem to have opted for a role reversal. Of late, Maharaj has been seen inching closer to the Trinamool. He was recently conferred the Banga Bhushan award by Mamata, and one of his close aides is now a TMC candidate from an Assembly segment in Cooch Behar.

Barman, on the other hand, is now aligned with the BJP, with two of his nominees featuring in the party's candidate list for the West Bengal polls.

"Bangshi Badan is with us. He is going out to campaign with me today," said Sukumar Roy, the BJP candidate from Cooch Behar Uttar.

And Anant Maharaj? "Well, he is our party MP. So, he is obviously with us," he added.

Keeping up appearances, as they say, remains an elemental aspect of political conduct.

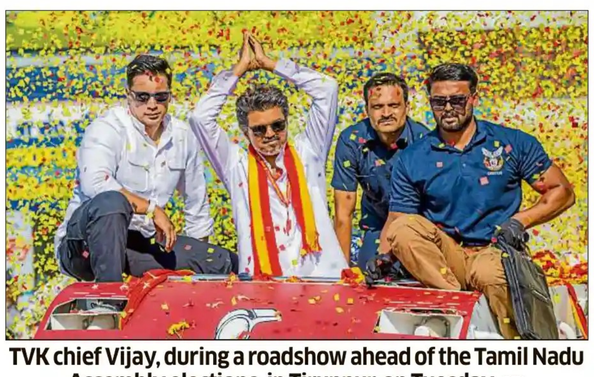
PEEK INTO THE PAST

- The Rajbanshis of North Bengal crystallised into one homogenous caste group over more than a century
- It started after the British introduced caste enumeration in the 1881 Census
- Rajbanshis were deemed an SC, and now account for nearly 18% of the state's electorate

For Vijay, a test of stardom and ground presence

Many are inclined to give him a chance, but is that enough?

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI/TIRUCHIRAPPALLI, DHNS



TVK chief Vijay, during a roadshow ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Tiruppur, on Tuesday. PTI

In Perambur and Tiruchirappalli (East), the choice before voters this election is stark: a high-profile debut by actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay as the chief-ministerial face of a fledgling party, or familiar local candidates with established ground presence.

TAMIL NADU
Assembly Poll

The contests in two urban constituencies have turned into a test of whether star power can outweigh accessibility and organisational depth. The contests are unfolding along similar lines, but with different local factors.

Perambur is largely expected to be a contest between Vijay and the DMK's R D Shekar, with the PMK's Thilagabama M trailing, while the battle is triangular in Tiruchirappalli (East) — between Vijay, the DMK's Inigo S Irudayaraj, and the AIADMK's G Rajasekaran.

The strategy, party insiders said, was less about winning two seats and more about creating a wider psychological ripple across urban Tamil Nadu.

The demography of both constituencies is interesting: Both have a sizeable minority presence. That is especially true for Tiruchirappalli (East), and that was one of the reasons Vijay chose it; he is Christian.

Watch the ground report from Perambur

For many voters here, local issues matter more than broader narratives of development. "I will vote for Vijay. I believe we should give a chance to a newcomer," 57-year-old Devaraj told *DH*, adding that he had been an AIADMK voter.

Support for Vijay seems to be stronger in localities dominated by the lower-middle class and the poor: They believe their constituency attaining "star-status" might solve long-pending problems.

Problems are also aplenty in Perambur: improper solid waste management, huge traffic snarls, crumbling government tenements, and above all, the sale of ganja.

These issues trump the DMK government's welfare projects and infrastructure push for North Chennai in the last five years.

But the contest is far from one-sided. "It will be a tough fight. The DMK has a strong presence here, and is reaching out to every household. Moreover, the DMK candidate is a local and can be approached anytime," Senthil, a resident, told *DH*.

But the biggest challenge to Vijay might come from the DMK's well-oiled election infrastructure. For the DMK, the challenge is countering Vijay's stardom.

If Perambur is a test of discontent, Tiruchirappalli (East) — a constituency with a mix of Christian Vellalars, Hindu Vellalars, Muslims, and other communities — is a test of balance.

'AMMK to remain a separate entity; won't merge with AIADMK'

Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) general secretary **T T V Dhinakaran**, nephew of V K Sasikala, is one of the most articulate politicians in Tamil Nadu. He launched the AMMK in 2018, months after he was expelled from the AIADMK and challenged his parent party in three successive elections by rebelling against its general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami. He finally joined the AIADMK-led NDA in January 2026. AMMK is contesting 11 seats. Dhinakaran spoke to **E T B Sivapriyan**. Excerpts:

Was there any pressure from the BJP to join the NDA in Tamil Nadu?

You must be aware that Home Minister Amit Shah had attempted to bring the AMMK into the NDA during the 2021 Assembly elections, but his efforts did not bear fruit then. Now it has happened. We have also realised that the AMMK contesting alone is one of the reasons why the AIADMK was not able to re-establish Amma's (J Jayalalithaa) rule in 2021. It is with the intention of bringing the AIADMK back to power that I accepted Shah's advice and joined the NDA. We also do not want the DMK government to come back for a consecutive term. There is no rule of law in Tamil Nadu, as the state is stuck under a family-run regime that does not care about anyone.

You and AIADMK chief EPS might have made peace with each other, but do you think the cadres of both parties will work together on the ground?

One has to understand that we were all together as Amma's children in the AIADMK. Wherever I go, AIADMK leaders come to meet me, and I can see cadres of all constituents of the NDA working together. Moreover, almost all of those fielded by the AMMK had held positions within the AIADMK before the split. It is common for brothers to fight, but it is also natural for them to make peace after a point in time.

Is your entry into the NDA a first step towards the AMMK merging with AIADMK?

It is not about the merger or no merger. We have been running a party in the name of Amma for the past eight years, and we have held a flag bearing her image for the past eight years. So, for us, folding up the flag and merging with our parent party will be troubling at the emotional level... The AMMK will continue to be a separate entity.

There is also speculation that you might capture the AIADMK eventually...

Where does the need arise for such a thing? EPS has been accepted by everyone in the AIADMK and has been duly elected by them as their general secretary. I don't think anybody would want to disturb that arrangement. I have no such intention (of capturing the AIADMK).

You are not contesting the 2026 polls. Was this decision taken to comfort EPS that you won't come in his way?

Absolutely. I have always believed that there cannot be two swords in one sheath. And I also believe that my contesting from the R K Nagar polls after Amma's death was one of the reasons for several problems that plagued the AIADMK. I want this relationship to be cordial.

TTV Dhinakaran

Will new players like your aunt V K Sasikala affect the chances of the AIADMK alliance?

The contest is between the alliances led by the DMK and the AIADMK, and others won't make much impact.

What is your opinion on Vijay?

Had Vijay stitched together a strong alliance, the impact would have been different.

'Logical discrepancy' selectively applied in West Bengal SIR: Mamata

KOLKATA, PTI: TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday alleged that "logical discrepancy" under the SIR exercise is not an officially recognised term under the Election Commission framework and was selectively applied in West Bengal, unlike Bihar, to benefit the BJP.

Addressing public rallies at Pingla in Paschim Medinipur, Tamluk in Purba Medinipur and Domjur in Howrah, Banerjee urged women to "stand firm" against security forces if attempts are made to prevent people from voting, while asserting that she was not asking anyone to indulge in violence.

The chief minister said, "There is no officially recognised term like 'logical discrepancy' under the framework of the Election Commission. It is being selectively applied in West Bengal, unlike in Bihar, to benefit the BJP."

MAMATA BANERJEE
West Bengal CM

"There is no officially recognised term like 'logical discrepancy' under the framework of the Election Commission. It is being selectively applied in West Bengal, unlike in Bihar, to benefit the BJP.

Mamata added that she has not seen a "dirty party" like the BJP. "The job of the central forces is to maintain peace. We have no objection to that. But what if they prevent people from voting? I will request women to keep brooms in their hands and stand firm against those wearing boots and carrying arms. I am not asking you to assault anyone or incite a riot, but you must do everything to safeguard your rights," Banerjee said.

"I even moved the Supreme Court to protect your rights, and only after that, the names of 32 lakh voters were enlisted," she added.

Banerjee questioned why such a large number of central forces were brought to West Bengal.

"They have brought in officers who are close to the BJP and replaced the ICs... If your sole aim was to keep peace here, you could have used the West Bengal Police. Why, instead of doing that, did you take away all their powers and bring in central forces from outside? People don't see central forces during any natural calamity or riot," she alleged.

The CM asked people to lodge complaints against any police officer if they were "tortured".

The TMC supremo, urging people to vote against the BJP, said, "The BJP has snatched everything from you... Voting against it would be your only way to take revenge."

She alleged that ahead of the elections, "instructions have been given to arrest booth agents".

BJP cautions P C George & son over church bashing

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Shone George

P C George

The induction of seven-time Kerala MLA P C George and his son Shone George into the BJP in 2024 was seen as part of the saffron party's efforts to make inroads into the Christian vote banks.

The two now appear to be further alienating the Christian community from the BJP with their harsh and abusive remarks against church heads and institutions.

The Kerala BJP core committee, in a meeting reportedly on Monday, cautioned the father-son duo against making any further statements against church heads because some party leaders had expressed their resentment.

Irked over church heads as well as the Catholic church's mouthpiece — Malayalam-language daily 'Deepika' — taking a pro-Congress stand in the Assembly elections, the father-son duo unleashed a verbal attack soon after polling on April 9. The move to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act was a key concern of the churches.

George, who often courted controversy with derogatory remarks against opponents, even made abusive remarks against Kanjirapally bishop Mar Jose Pulickal.

KERALA
Assembly Poll

Meanwhile, Shone, who alleged that some church heads and the church mouthpiece were surrendering to the political interests of Congress leaders like K C Venugopal, even cautioned that the BJP would be forced to take a position against churches if they didn't want its support.

Their remarks invited strong reactions from the church heads.

Pala bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt said politicians should maintain decorum and that any attempts to raise threats would not work. He also defended the church heads' rights to inform the people about public matters.

In what could be seen as a patch-up bid, Shone — a state vice president of the BJP — called on Syro-Malabar church head Major Archbishop Mar Raphel Thattil on Monday and assured to arrange a meeting of church heads with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Shone also said that he had great respect for church heads.

The Christian community is over 18% of Kerala's population as per the 2011 census, and remains a decisive vote bank in many parts of the state, especially its central part.

In this election, the BJP fielded Union Minister of state for Minority Affairs and Rajya Sabha member George Kurian, BJP state general secretary Anoop Antony, and P C George and Shone in the Christian strongholds of Central Kerala.

Bengaluru Wednesday, April 15, 2026 Pages 16 Vol 79 No 104 ₹7

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The Power of Good

CM fires Naseer Ahmed as political secretary

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Fuel price freeze: Rs 18/litre loss on petrol, Rs 35 on diesel

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'Covid vaccines caused Warne's death'

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Business

Car wholesale jumps to 13L units P.10

Business

IMF raises India's growth forecast P.10

For 33% women's quota, LS to have up to 850 seats

Bill seeks to retain 500 cap for Assembly constituencies

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A contentious bill seeking for an early implementation of 33% women's quota has proposed increasing the number of seats in Lok Sabha to 850 – 815 for states and the remaining for Union Territories – from the existing 550 while proposing no change to the upper limit of 500 constituencies in Assemblies.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 proposes that the 33% quota in Lok Sabha and Assemblies be implemented after delimitation following the "latest published census". This will allow the government to make Census 2011 as the base for earmarking seats for women while removing the provision for a Census conducted after the enactment of the 2023 law for its roll out.

It also removes the Constitutional provision for delimitation of seats after every Census by empowering the Parliament to make a new law on the periodicity of such an exercise. It amends the definition of "population" to mean figures arrived after at "such Census, as Parliament may by law determine, of which the relevant figures have been published".

The government has circulated the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, The Delimitation Bill, 2026 and The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 on Tuesday, as Parliament is set to reconvene Budget Session on April 16 to pass these Bills to enable the implementation of women's quota in 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

While the government has intimated some parties that it proposes to increase the seats by 50% that was objected by the Opposition, the Bills are not clear on how the Lok Sabha seats will be distributed among states and the increase in Assembly constituencies.

According to the Bill, Lok Sabha shall consist of not more than 815 members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the states and not more than 35 members to represent the Union Territories, chosen in such manner as Parliament may by law provide. At present, it is 530 and 20 respectively.

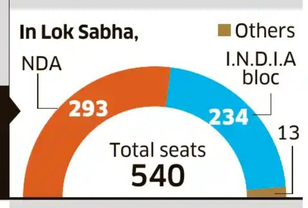
Sources said the Delimitation Commission will take the call on the rate of increase and it is expected to be around 50%. With the Bill not increasing the upper limit of Assembly seats presently set at 500, Uttar Pradesh with 403 constituencies will be the only state that may not be able to increase seats by the proposed 50%.

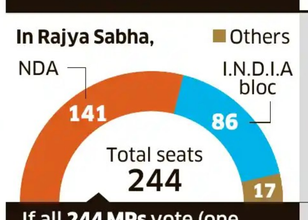
▸ Women's quota, Page 3B

HOW IT WORKS

1. Once the Bills are passed, a Delimitation Commission will be set up
2. Delimitation Commission will decide on number of seats in Lok Sabha and Assemblies
3. Govt will need Opposition support for passing the Constitution Amendment Bill

If all existing **540 MPs** (three vacancies) are present, the Govt will need **360 votes** to clear the Bill





If all **244 MPs** vote (one vacancy), the Govt will need **163 votes**

"While the freeze of seats on the basis of population figures of the 1971 census served an important policy purpose, the country's demographic profile has undergone changes, **the Bill says**

■ Bill to be discussed in Lok Sabha on April 16, 17 and in Rajya Sabha on April 18

Resist, Revanth tells south CMs

Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday urged chief ministers of the southern states - Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, to join a coordinated resistance among southern states against the Centre's proposed hike in Lok Sabha seats on a pro rata basis.
Details on Page 8

Govt: Southern states will benefit

The government has said that proportionally, southern states will benefit from delimitation, contending that the population in South India has not increased as much as in North India since the 1971 Census, and yet southern states will get a 50% hike in seats.
Details on Page 8

13 killed in explosion at power plant in Chhattisgarh

SAKTI (CHHATTISGARH), PTI: Thirteen workers were killed and 21 sustained injuries after a boiler exploded at a power plant in Chhattisgarh's Sakti district on Tuesday, police said.

According to preliminary information, the blast occurred in a boiler tube at the Vedanta Limited power plant in Singhitarai village in the afternoon, Sakti Superintendent of Police Prafull Thakur said.

"Thirteen workers have died, and 21 have sustained injuries," he said, adding that three victims were killed on the spot while the others succumbed to injuries at hospitals.

The injured were undergoing treatment at hospitals in Raigarh district, he said.

Local administration and police teams rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations, the official said.

He said that as the area around the boiler remains extremely hot, workers and staff have been evacuated from the vicinity. Rescue operations are underway to check if more persons are trapped, he added.

Trump calls Modi, pushes 'big deals' amid West Asia crisis

Energy pacts among those to be inked, says US envoy Gor

NEW DELHI, PTI

US President Donald Trump dialled Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday to discuss the West Asia crisis and the need to keep the Strait of Hormuz "open and secure" even as US envoy Sergio Gor said India and the US are expected to seal certain "big-ticket" deals soon, including in the energy sector, to further boost bilateral ties.

Shortly after the nearly 40-minute conversation, Modi said he and Trump reviewed the "substantial progress" in the bilateral ties and that both sides are committed to further strengthening the India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership in "all areas".

The call between the two leaders came amid increasing global concerns over the US naval blockade of Iran's ports, as well as reports that Washington and Tehran may hold a second phase of direct negotiations days after the collapse of initial talks in Islamabad.

It was the third phone call between the two leaders this year and the first after the recent peace talks between Iran and the US. They spoke on February 2 to announce progress in a trade deal, and on March 24 to discuss the situation in West Asia.

Soon after the call, US ambassador Gor told a select group of journalists that some "big-ticket deals", including on energy, are expected to be sealed between India and the US in the next "few days and weeks". However, he refused to elaborate on the deals.

"Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors. We are committed to further strengthening our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas," Modi said on social media.

"We discussed the West Asia situation and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open," he said.

▸ Trump, Page 5

Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors.
PM Narendra Modi

US-Iran talks again in Pak?

Pakistan is engaged in high-level contacts to bring Iran and the US back to the negotiating table and the two sides may meet again in Islamabad for a second round of talks by next week, according to a media report on Tuesday.
Details on Page 10

BJP's Samrat to be new Bihar CM

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Samrat Choudhary is set to become the new chief minister of Bihar after he was formally elected leader of the BJP Legislature Party on Tuesday.

Samrat's name was proposed during a meeting by the outgoing Deputy CM, Vijay Sinha, in the presence of the Central observer and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

In the evening, Samrat met Governor Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain and staked a claim to form the government, the first-ever BJP-headed Government in Bihar.

The swearing-in of the new CM, and possibly a small Cabinet, will take place on April 15.

Though there could be one Deputy CM from the JD(U), the chances of Nishant Kumar, son of Nitish, being sworn in as Samrat's deputy look bleak, said sources.

Earlier in the day, Nitish Kumar resigned as the chief minister after serving the state for around 20 years.

▸ Samrat, Page 3B

Nitish Kumar greets Samrat Choudhary during the NDA legislators' meeting, in Patna on Tuesday. PTI

Bengaluru to sizzle at 37°C, says IMD

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The India Meteorological Department has forecast five days of hot and humid conditions in the state's three coastal districts from April 15.

A heatwave is also expected to persist for four days across Bidar, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, Gadag, Koppal, Kalaburagi, Yadgir and Raichur districts.

Bengaluru is likely to witness a sharp rise in temperatures, with the mercury expected to reach 37°C, accompanied by chances of evening showers.

Meteorologists have warned that temperatures across the state will gradually rise over the next five days. On Tuesday, some parts of Karnataka, especially the north and south interior, witnessed a rise of 1.6°C to 3°C above normal. N Puviarasan, Head of Meteorological Centre, Bengaluru, said that the three coastal districts will witness hot and humid conditions, which could adversely impact human health as it would result in more perspiration due to excess humidity.

"During hot and humid conditions, the temperatures will not only hover above normal, but also see an excess of humidity. This will result in dehydration, exhaustion and weakness," he said and told the public to stay hydrated with buttermilk, tender coconut, lime juice and others, and to avoid aerated drinks.

▸ Heatwave, Page 3B

GOLDEN GLOW

Devotees light lamps on the occasion of 'Baisakhi' at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Tuesday. PTI

GBA polls could be delayed as SEC's work drags

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amid speculations that the elections to the five city corporations will be delayed again, the Urban Development Department (UDD) has filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court stating that it has fulfilled all its responsibilities for holding the much-delayed polls by June-end.

However, the state election commission (SEC) – which had also made a commitment before the apex court of finalising the electoral roll by March 16 – is yet to comply.

In its affidavit filed before the apex court on April 13, the state government has clarified that the final ward-wise reservation notifications for all five city corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area were issued on March 7, 2026.

The affidavit, submitted by Additional Chief Secretary Tushar Girinath, acknowledges that there was a delay of 15 days in publishing the final notifications.

▸ GBA polls, Page 5

Quickly

Noida workers' protest: Over 300 arrested

Stray incidents of violence were reported from Noida on Tuesday, a day after thousands of workers of private companies went on the rampage demanding increase in wages, overtime payment and other benefits. According to police sources, more than 300 people were taken into custody in connection with violence.

250 missing after boat capsizes in Andaman Sea

About 250 people, including children, were feared missing after a boat carrying Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals capsized in the Andaman Sea, the United Nations said on Tuesday. "The trawler, which departed from Teknaf in southern Bangladesh and was on its way to Malaysia," the UNHCR said.

Gunman injures 16 at Turkish school, kills self

A former student opened fire at a high school in southeastern Turkiye on Tuesday, wounding at least 16 people before killing himself, an official said. The attacker was 18, said officials.
Details on Page 10

TCS Nashik incident isolated, says Nasscom

Nasscom has termed the sexual harassment incidents at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) as "isolated in nature" and do not reflect a systemic pattern in India's IT industry. It added that employee safety and well-being remain non-negotiable priorities, and the industry maintains zero tolerance for any form of inappropriate behaviour.
Details on Page 10

COSTLY MISS

13,000 poor families in B'luru to lose homes over unpaid dues

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Nearly 13,000 poor people in Bengaluru may soon lose homes allotted to them under two government schemes as the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation Limited (RGHCL) has decided to cancel allotments over non-payment of stipulated fees, officials said.

The decision was taken at a recent board meeting, and the corporation is expected to start sending cancellation letters next week.

Over the past decade, around 23,000 beneficiaries were allotted houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) and the CM's Multi-Storeyed Bengaluru Housing Scheme. However, about 13,000 allottees have paid only the initial deposit of Rs 50,000, against the total of nearly Rs 8 lakh.

The houses — currently vacant — were allotted over different years, including in 2018 and 2023.

The RGHCL issued multiple notices to allottees seeking payment of the balance amount. "We have issued three notices and even temporary cancellation letters. They have still not paid the pending amount," an official told *DH*.

Officials said timely payments were crucial to completing projects. Cancelling allotments and selecting new beneficiaries would help ensure better utilisation of the houses, they added. "Hundreds of people are waiting for allotments. If selected beneficiaries are not paying, it is only fair to cancel their allotment and give it to those waiting instead of keeping houses vacant," another official said.

Allottees will not receive a full refund. Citing "inconvenience and delay" caused by defaulters, the corporation plans to deduct 25% from the initial deposit.

▸ Homes, Page 3B

Government of Bharat

Committed to Nari Shakti Vandan

#NariShaktiVandan

Guarantee of 33% Reservation for Women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies

Tap water access in 15.8+ crore homes

12.1+ crore toilets built, ensuring dignity

CBC 22201/13/0011/2627

Green cover gone, city baking; now it is your problem to fix

Umbrellas up as soaring temperatures drive visitors to seek shade outside the Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/RANJU P

NOTF bets on neighbourhood ownership

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru's green cover has fallen from 78% to 6%, its natural cooling systems are gone, and the city is baking.

A new digital platform wants residents to stop complaining and start acting.

The Neighbourhoods of the Future (NOTF) platform, backed by the Rainmatter Foundation, has launched a hyperlocal data and project hub to address the city's worsening ecology.

Sathya Sankaran, Urban Strategy Lead at the Rainmatter Foundation, said the bigger obstacle to urban reform was not infrastructure, but mindset.

"Today, nobody cares or bothers about any issues in their neighbourhood; all have become consumers and only blame others. The idea is to have local ownership for a climate-friendly future," Sankaran said.

SECTORS & TARGETS

- The NOTF platform monitors seven key climate sectors. These include water, energy, and transportation.
- It establishes specific environmental targets. One goal is achieving 100% waste segregation by 2025. Another target is reducing PM10 air pollution by 40% by 2026.

"The idea behind the platform is to reach a point where more and more people think about civic issues," Sankaran added.

The loss of green cover, documented in a recent Indian Institute of Science (IISc) study, has stripped the city of its natural cooling capacity, leaving residents exposed as urban heat islands intensify across 369 wards.

The NOTF platform tracks seven climate sectors — water, energy and transportation among them — and sets targets, including 100% waste segregation by 2025 and a 40% reduction in PM10 air pollutants by 2026.

Around 14 active communities, including the Banashankari Environmental Forum and the Bellandur Development Forum, are already driving local interventions through the platform.

Beyond data, the platform functions as a civic matchmaking engine. Its Nudge Unit doesn't just collect data, but it actively connects people's needs (Asks) with solutions (Gives).

"Across cities, many communities are taking small, but meaningful steps improving walkability, managing waste better and increasing green cover. Through NOTF, we are building a platform to showcase and connect such inspiring initiatives and creating a marketplace of practical climate solutions," Sankaran said.

The platform also hosts a repository of success stories — among them, "Rethinking Urban Waste in Hebbagodi" and "The Corner That Became a Home" — as proof that hyperlocal action can yield tangible results.

Residents and solution providers can register at notf.in/join and share their community stories.

Traffic police warn against triple-riding, vow strict crackdown

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has issued a public advisory warning against triple-riding on two-wheelers, stating that the practice significantly increases the risk of accidents despite being seen as a matter of convenience.

In a post on X on Tuesday, the BTP highlighted key dangers, including a higher likelihood of serious injuries, loss of balance and control, and violation of traffic rules.

The police noted that carrying more than one pillion rider can lead to loss of control due to altered weight distribution, making it difficult to steer or brake effectively. It added that triple-riding endangers not only the riders, but also other road users and constitutes a direct violation of the Motor Vehicles Act.

The offence attracts a fine ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 under existing traffic regulations.

The enforcement drive includes physical patrolling at junctions to identify and penalise violators. "Convenience cannot come at the cost of life. We are monitoring major corridors and educational zones where this trend is most prevalent," a senior traffic officer said.

BDA takes steps to prepare long-delayed master plan

RMP allocates land for infra, guides future development

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has initiated the process of selecting a private agency to prepare a GIS-based revised master plan for the Local Planning Areas (LPA), with a horizon period of 2041.

This move is significant, as the authority is currently relying on a master plan prepared nearly two decades ago.

The exercise is crucial because the Revised Master Plan (RMP) will earmark land for public infrastructure such as roads, parks, and civic amenities in areas that are yet to be developed. It will also guide the development and redevelopment of land parcels.

In November 2017, the BDA had prepared a draft master plan with a horizon period of 2031.

However, the state government shelved the vision document without citing any reasons.

The new master plan is expected to build upon and improve this earlier draft.

Notably, the BDA's jurisdiction has reduced following the creation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), which is also vested with planning powers. While the GBA will oversee an area of about 721 square kilometres, the BDA's master plan will now cover approximately 545 square kilometres.

In the state budget, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah set a deadline of two years for the completion of the Revised Master Plan 2041.

Additionally, the government has indicated its intent to update Bengaluru's long-neglected Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP) within six months.

Govt rolls out red carpet to woo billboard bidders

BENGALURU, DHNS: In an effort to make advertisement tenders more attractive to bidders, the state government has proposed draft amendments to the Greater Bengaluru Area (Advertisement) Rules, allowing a 40% reduction in payable advertisement space.

In a notification dated April 13, the Urban Development Department (UDD) has published the draft rules and invited objections and suggestions within 30 days, after which a final decision will be taken.

The amendment introduces flexibility where tenders fail to attract bids. In such cases, the five city corporations or the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) may allow reduced payment obligations in subsequent tenders.

Under the revised provision, the successful bidder in a re-tender may be required to pay advertisement fees on 40% of the total space assigned or the space actually erected, whichever is higher, during the initial period.

Advertising billboards at Mysuru Road. DH FILE PHOTO

If a bidder doesn't start paying for the full ad space within 12 months, the contract is automatically cancelled. The policy mixes flexibility with strict deadlines to boost participation while ensuring timely revenue collection.

Officials said the move is aimed at making tenders more viable and improving participation, especially in stretches where advertisement potential has remained underutilised.

The draft rules also introduce a stricter enforcement mechanism to prevent delays in revenue realisation.

If a bidder fails to start paying for the full assigned space within 12 months of signing the agreement, the contract for the roads or areas concerned will be deemed terminated.

The changes come at a time when all five corporations are betting on advertisement revenue to meet growing expenditure.

Whitefield tragedy: Woman smothers daughter, ends life

BENGALURU, DHNS

Suvarna

Tarunya

A 43-year-old woman battling anxiety killed her 13-year-old daughter before hanging herself at their Immadihalli residence in Whitefield on Monday night.

The deceased are Suvarna and her daughter Tarunya, a Class 8 student at a private school. The family's 15-year-old son Dhanush lives in a college hostel in the city.

The incident came to light on Tuesday morning when Suvarna's husband Chandrashekar, a clerk at a private hospital on HAL Road, could not reach her on the phone.

Around 11 am, he called her brother Manjunath, who lives on Bannerghatta Road, to check on her.

Manjunath went to the house and knocked repeatedly. When there was no response, he broke open the door and found Suvarna hanging, while Tarunya was unconscious.

Whitefield police were immediately alerted. A Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team conducted a spot mahazar and found that Tarunya had been smothered to death.

Based on preliminary investigations, police said Suvarna and Chandrashekar had watched IPL matches together late into the night. She asked him to sleep in another room, saying she would wake up late, and told him to have breakfast at the hospital canteen.

The couple lived on the ground floor of the house, while Chandrashekar's parents occupied the first floor. His parents remained unaware of the incident until Manjunath arrived. No suicide note was found.

Chandrashekar told police that Suvarna had been under depression and suffering from anxiety for a few months.

Family's allegations

Suvarna's brothers have alleged that she was being neglected by Chandrashekar's family and was not given money for daily expenses.

The exact reason that led her to take this step is yet to be ascertained, a senior police officer said.

Based on a complaint by Manjunath, Whitefield police have registered a case. Investigations are on.

Five, including juvenile, held for stealing valuables worth Rs 17 lakh

BENGALURU, DHNS: Basaveshwaranagar police have arrested five people, including a juvenile, for allegedly stealing valuables worth Rs 17 lakh from a house when the resident was away, officials said.

The complainant, from BEML Layout, alleged that on March 31, when she returned from yoga practice, she found the house lock broken and gold ornaments and cash stolen.

On April 3, police arrested two suspects near Dasarahalli.

"On the same day, near the Anmod Village check post on the Ramanagara-Goa road, another suspect, along with a juvenile, was secured. Upon interrogation, the accused confessed to committing the theft of gold ornaments in this case," the police said in a statement.

While the other suspects were taken into police custody, the juvenile was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board.

"During further interrogation, the accused revealed that part of the stolen gold ornaments was kept at their residence, and part was sold to known people and at jewellery shops in Yadiyur and KP Agrahara," police said.

The suspects were living in and around the area where the theft was committed and had gained the trust of the woman by helping her with menial tasks. "Through this, they had learned where the valuables were kept inside the house," a police officer said.

Based on information from the suspects, police recovered 115 grams of gold ornaments, an autorickshaw used for the offence, and Rs 13,400 cash.

Two arrested for RT Nagar house theft; Rs 10-lakh gold recovered

BENGALURU, DHNS: RT Nagar police have arrested two people in a house theft case and recovered stolen gold ornaments worth Rs 10.55 lakh, officials said.

On March 29, a local resident alleged that she found 80 grams of gold ornaments missing from her room when she returned from work.

A case was registered and a probe was initiated.

Police arrested two suspects, including a woman. The probe revealed that the main accused had handed over the stolen valuables to the woman. Police recovered 75.39 grams of gold ornaments from her house.

On April 6, the suspects were produced before a court and sent to judicial custody. Further investigation is underway.

Train cancellations on April 16& 17

BENGALURU, DHNS: Due to line and power blocks in connection with engineering works at the Yeliyur railway station yard in Mandya, the following trains will be cancelled:

Train number 66580 Ashokapuram-KSR Bengaluru MEMU will be cancelled on April 16.

Train number 66579 KSR Bengaluru-Ashokapuram MEMU service will be cancelled on April 17.

Minor sexually assaulted; two booked for filming act to blackmail victim

BENGALURU, DHNS

Jeevan Beema Nagar police have registered a Pocso case against two men for allegedly sexually assaulting a minor girl in Murugeshpalya.

Police said the accused were arrested after an FIR was registered by officials from the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) on Tuesday.

According to the FIR, on April 11, a local resident saw the girl being assaulted by her female colleague inside a salon and informed the police through the Namma 112 emergency helpline.

During counselling by the child helpline and DCPU team, the 16-year-old victim, originally from Delhi, stated that she had been undergoing training at a salon run by the accused since October 2025 and was forced to live with one of them.

During this time, she was sexually assaulted. The prime accused, who had befriended her, also recorded the incident to blackmail her and threatened her not to disclose it to anyone.

Family disowns her

Based on the victim's statement, DCPU officials visited her parents, who live in Electronics City.

However, they reportedly refused to take her back, stating that she had left home years ago.

The girl was then sent to a child care institution, and Jeevan Beema Nagar police are continuing their investigation into the case.

Man passes lewd remarks at teen student, booked

BENGALURU, DHNS: Koramangala police have registered a case against a middle-aged man for allegedly passing obscene remarks at an 18-year-old student.

The accused has been identified as 48-year-old Sarvesh, a resident of Adugodi.

A senior police officer said the incident took place on April 9 in Koramangala 5th Block.

Around 8 pm, the complainant was walking towards her residence when the accused got out of his car after parking near a restaurant. He made inappropriate comments while standing next to the vehicle.

When the complainant turned around, he passed lewd remarks again, saying "you are so sexy", humiliating her.

The student contacted her father over the phone and alerted him about the incident, after which the accused fled the spot.

She approached Koramangala police and filed a complaint. Based on CCTV footage, police identified the accused and issued a notice. He is absconding in Mysuru, police said.

IN THE CITY

GENERAL

BR Ambedkar Jayanti: Lecture by AR Govindaswamy; Organised by Alliance University; University campus, Chandapura; 2 pm.

Book release: 'Mahamane', authored by SG Siddaramaiah; Shivaramaiah, Belur Raghunandan, KV Nagarajamurthy and others to participate; Organised by Rangachandira; Nayana Auditorium, Kannada Bhavana, JC Road; 5 pm.

CULTURAL

Play: 'Sevanthi Prasanga'; Directed by Ramakrishna Belthur; Organised by Navarasa Natana Academy; Seva Sadana, Malleswaram; 6 pm.

Ramanavami Sangeethotsava: Vocals by TM Krishna, HK Venkataram on violin; Sri Vani Kala Kendra, Basaveshwaranagar; 6.30 pm.

Play: 'Kanthu'; Directed by Manjunath L Badiger; Samashti team to perform; Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; 7.30 pm.

CITY WEATHER

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.0°C
Minimum	24.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	NIL
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	29%
Sunset (Apr 15)	6:32 pm
Sunrise (Apr 16)	6:08 am
Moonrise	3:36 am
Moonset	3:44 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Police to auction 22 seized vehicles today

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bagalur police will auction 22 seized vehicles — 19 two-wheelers and three four-wheelers — at 9 am on Wednesday.

The vehicles were seized in different cases, but no rightful owners were identified.

"As per the order of the court, these 19 two-wheelers and three four-wheeler vehicles will be auctioned through a public auction at 9 am on April 15, 2026, on the premises of the Bagalur police station," a police statement said.

Those interested, may contact 080-28469100 or 9480801418 for details.

WALKWAYS USURPED

Step aside, pedestrians; the footpaths are taken

Screen grab of a stretch on Old Madras Road, from a video posted on X.

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The city's footpaths are back in the spotlight — dug up, encroached upon, and overrun by two-wheelers — with residents and civic groups demanding action.

A video of a footpath on Old Madras Road, posted on X by brand and business strategy specialist Harish Bijoor of Harish Bijoor Consults Inc, showed the path dug up in several places, with slabs either missing or carelessly placed.

"Pedestrian safety in Bengaluru is taken for granted. The entire city is facing footpath problems. If anywhere the footpath is considerably better, the two-wheelers are either parked on them or driven on them," Bijoor told *DH*.

"Why do we have the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) if they cannot address issues like this? Zero tolerance for riding scooters on footpaths should be enforced, as riders often react aggressively when asked to leave," he said.

Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) is conducting a citizen-led audit of footpaths across the city.

HARISH BIJOOR
Brand & business strategy specialist

"Why do we have GBA if they cannot address issues like this? Zero tolerance for riding scooters on footpaths should be enforced, as riders often react aggressively when asked to leave.

BNP founder Srikanth Narasimhan said the party had begun the audit in several wards, enlisting local residents to identify problem stretches.

"Most of the footpaths are unwalkable. So far, we have found that there is a lot of garbage piled on the footpath, vendors have occupied the footpaths, and the situation is worsened by infrastructure shortfalls on the footpaths," he said.

"The footpaths have become useful for everything except for walking. We should have a designated vending place, which helps resolve inconvenience to the residents, pedestrians and vendors," Narasimhan added.

Complaints of garbage piling on footpaths were also reported near Prestige Shanthiniketan in Whitefield.

On two-wheeler encroachment, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy said the traffic police had conducted strict drives against footpath riders for two months and would continue enforcement.

"E-bikes used mostly by gig workers are our challenge as they do not come under the Motor Vehicles Act," Reddy said, adding that gig workers were being trained to drive safely around the city.

Regulatory panel asks engg colleges to share fee structure

Not intimated about recent hike in annual fee: Panel chief

BENGALURU, DHNS

Close on the heels of the annual fee for engineering courses being hiked by 7.5%, the Fee Regulatory Committee (FRC), headed by former High Court judge Justice Srinivas Gowda, has asked private engineering colleges in the state to share their proposed fee structure.

After the FRC asked the Department of Higher Education to issue relevant directions to the private colleges, the department intimated the Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) to in turn inform its affiliate colleges to share the details sought by the committee.

In addition to the proposed fee structure, colleges have been asked to submit audited financial statements, records and relevant certificates dating back three years. The FRC has instructed colleges to ensure that the fees are charged exclusively for educational expenses such as salaries and allowance for teaching and non-teaching staff, administrative expenses, maintenance of infrastructure, et al. The colleges must charge pre-applicable statutory rates for each of the services.

"Costs incurred for services other than those pertaining to education must not be included," the FRC stated in its communication.

The FRC is keen on fixing the fee for professional courses for the 2026-27 academic year. Queried about the Higher Education Department's decision to hike the fee for engineering courses, Justice Gowda said, "We are not aware of the department's meeting with representatives of private institutions. The committee has not been informed about it."

He said that medical colleges and institutions offering other professional courses too would be asked to share their proposed fee structure with the committee.

Then chairman of the FRC Justice D V Shylendra Kumar had fixed the fee for professional courses for the 2018-19 academic year, despite which the government went ahead and signed a consensual agreement with private institutions. This subsequently prompted the committee to instruct the government to ensure that the fee was not hiked by more than 8%. Although the committee was constituted under the provisions of the Karnataka Professional Education Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Determination of Fee) Act, 2006, the government insists on signing agreements with colleges each year, keeping the act in abeyance.

Seer forced hostel boys to do body massage: Trustee

DAVANGERE, DHNS

Panchamasali Gurupeeth trustee Chandrashekhar Poojar has accused seer Vachanananda swami, who was expelled from the Gurupeeth, of using boys in the mutt hostel near Harihar for body massage and other works.

Addressing reporters here on Tuesday, Poojar said that the aggrieved students and their parents had come forward to file a police complaint.

"If they had filed a complaint, a Pocso case would have been registered and Vachanananda would have been arrested. But we had requested the parents not to file a complaint to safeguard reputation of the mutt and community," he said.

Poojar said the Gurupeeth had established a hostel two years ago. Initially, there were 60 students in the hostel. The seer used to get body massages done by 4 to 5 students daily in a 'perverted manner'. Due to this, many students left the hostel. Now, only 5 were left, he said.

Poojar said, "When trustees came to know about this, we tried to advise him not to indulge in such acts. The seer revolted against us and sought from us details of utilisation of funds released by successive governments, to cover up his mistakes."

He dared that if the seer had any morality, he should leave the mutt soon. If he did not, the trustees knew how to send him out, he warned.

Poojar shared a video in which Vachanananda had allegedly abused staff and students of the Gurupeeth. In the clip, students alleged that he used them for personal works, including body massage and washing clothes.

AMBEDKAR FOREVER

Members of the Bengaluru City Corporation Workers' Federation pay floral tributes to a statue of Dr B R Ambedkar on the occasion of his 135th birth anniversary in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/RANJU P

Hippopotamus 'Hamsini' dies in Shivamogga zoo

She had fatally attacked vet Sameeksha last month

SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS

Hippopotamus 'Hamsini', 12, who attacked trainee veterinarian Sameeksha Reddy on the night of March 19, resulting in the doctor's death subsequently, succumbed to her illness at the Tyavarekoppa zoo-cum-safari near here on Tuesday.

Sameeksha was attacked by the hippo when she was returning from the animal's enclosure after checking her temperature through a thermal imaging camera as she had stopped taking food. Later, she died in a hospital.

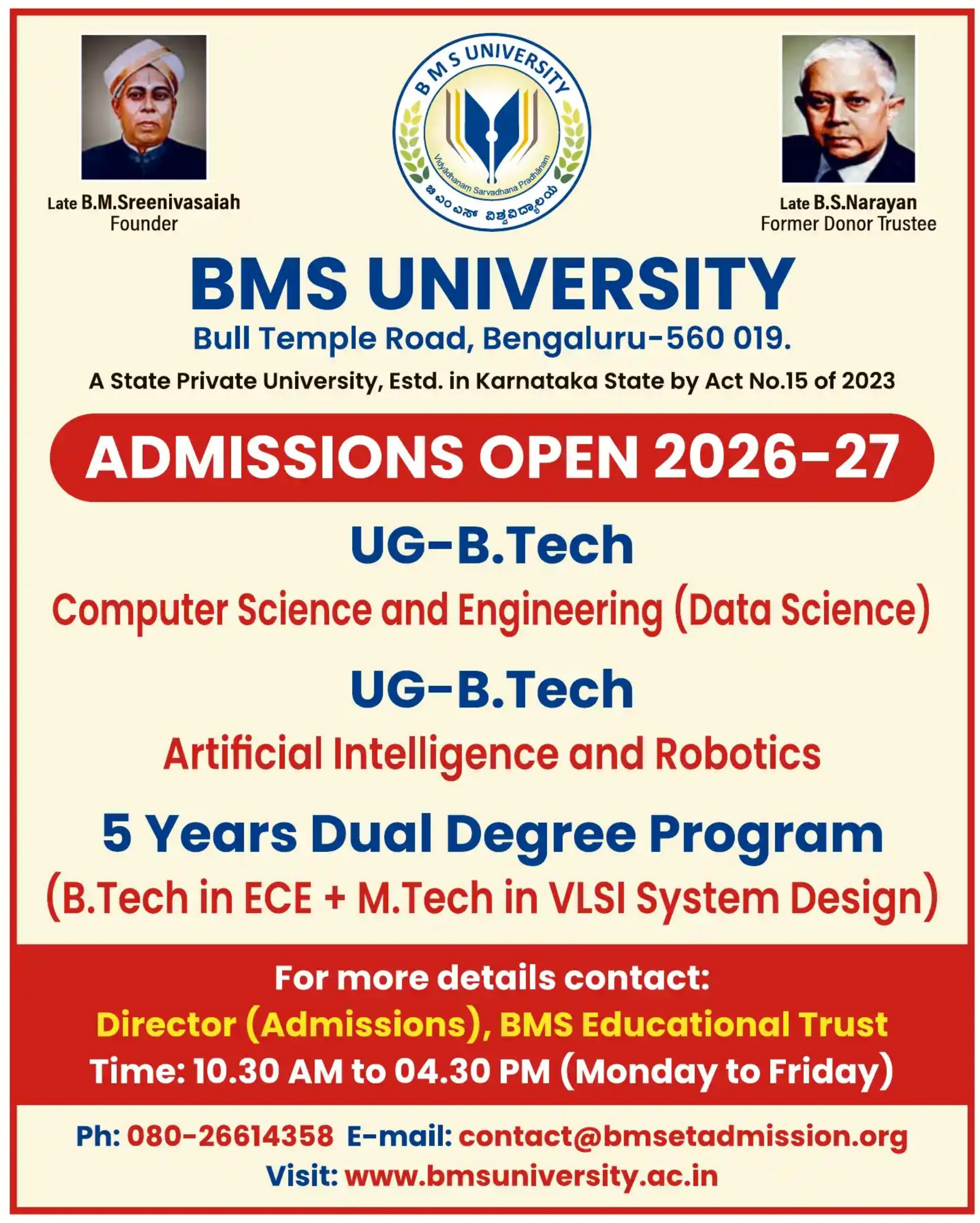
The post-mortem of Hamsini will be conducted in the zoo on Wednesday.

Veterinary officer Anand from Bengaluru zoo was treating her in the zoo after she had a miscarriage and he had consulted veterinary gynaecologists. They suggested that caesarean was the only option to remove the dead foetus from her uterus. But it could not be performed, considering her condition.

Hamsini had an infection in the uterus and subsequently multi-organ infection, which resulted in her death. She was not taking medication. Three hippopotamuses have died in the zoo in the last three years.

With Hamsini's death, the efforts of the zoo staff to get a calf from the lone surviving female hippopotamus to enhance the population of the species have gone in vain.

Vishnu, aged 9 years, is the lone hippo available for public viewing in the zoo now.



Woman murdered for eloping with man from other caste

BELAGAVI, DHNS: A tip-off over hurried last rites of a woman helped police crack a murder over out-of-caste elopment in Nandigudi of Hukkeri taluk.

Police said a 24-year-old married woman was murdered by her family members by force-feeding poison to her on March 21. The body was cremated in the cover of night.

She was married to a man from Raibag taluk. But she had an affair with a man from Nandigudi. As her husband turned a liquor addict, she eloped with the Nandigudi man on Feb 17. Both belonged to different castes. They were brought back after their families filed a missing complaint. All attempts to convince her against the relationship went in vain.

In March, the family members brought her to Araga in Maharashtra's Sangli district, where she was murdered.

Yamakanamaradi police inspector Javed Mushapuri got a tip-off that the woman could have been murdered. After grilling, 3 suspects confessed to the crime.

Tejasvi seeks rollback of lifetime tax on e-cars

Writes to CM, says decision regressive

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bangalore South MP L S Tejasvi Surya has written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking the withdrawal of lifetime tax on electric cars.

The state legislature recently passed the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to levy lifetime tax on e-cars priced up to Rs 25 lakh. Cars priced up to Rs 10 lakh pay 5%, while those costing between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh fork out 8%. E-cars priced above Rs 25 lakh already carry a 10% road tax. Two-wheelers will remain exempt.

The state aims to earn around Rs 250 crore from the taxation in 2026–27. It levies a 13-18% lifetime tax on conventional cars based on their floor area and cost.

In his April 13 letter, Surya called the decision 'regressive', noting that it runs counter to the broader national objective of accelerating electric mobility.

"Rather than incentivising adoption, it risks discouraging consumers and slowing the growth of the electric vehicle ecosystem in the state," he stated.

According to Surya, the tax 'contradicts' national priorities, especially as India aims for net-zero emissions through sustainable and renewable approaches and must urgently reduce its dependence on fossil fuels in the current global scenario.

Citing Delhi's example, which offers 100% road tax waivers for e-cars under Rs 30 lakh, he urged the chief minister to reconsider the policy.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has defended the policy, pointing out that e-car tax rates in Karnataka are lower compared to other states. He also believes that the taxation will not deter EV buyers, given the strong vehicle demand in Bengaluru. However, he clarified that the tax will not be levied on existing vehicles.

The tax rates will come into effect after the bill is notified in the gazette, Reddy told *DH* last week.

The state legislature recently passed the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to levy lifetime tax on e-cars priced up to Rs 25 lakh. PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

TB dam gates can last 70 yrs with yearly maintenance: Expert

HOSAPETE (VIJAYANAGAR DIST), DHNS: Hydro-mechanical engineer Kannaiah Naidu affirmed on Tuesday that the installation of new crest gates in the Tungabhadra dam had been undertaken perfectly and that it would last 20 years without any maintenance.

He said that work on installing the last 33rd gate had begun and that the new crest gates would last another 70 years with proper maintenance every year. The replacement of gates was necessitated after gate number 19 of the dam was washed away as the chain link snapped in 2024.

The expert hydro-mechanical engineer was addressing a press conference after inspecting work on installing new crest gates in the dam.

Naidu said that he was a member of the national dam safety authority and that none could question once he had certified the safety of gates.

Work on installing 26 of the 33 crest gates had been fully completed and testing work was on for 15 of them. Slim plates were being installed for some of them.

The placing of the last gate would be completed by Saturday, the expert said, adding that the pending welding works would be fully done by this month end.

Chain links were expected to arrive here from Chennai by May 11 and all other works except incorporating the chain links would have been finished by May 15, he said.

Installing chain links was not that complicated and incorporating the chain link of one gate each would be completed every day.

This work could be undertaken even when the dam was full of water. It would not be a problem even if it rained in May, Naidu said.

So, it could be said with certainty that water could be impounded safely in the reservoir this year, thec expert asserted.

O R K Reddy, secretary of the Tungabhadra Board, gave a break-up of the expenses so far for replacing the 33 gates of the reservoir.

The new gates would cost Rs 44 crore, he said, while the chain links would cost Rs 5.1 crore. Consultation charges would come to around Rs 1.34 crore, he said. The whole exercise would cost a total of Rs 51 crore, Reddy said, adding that Rs 29.5 crore had been paid to contractors so far.

Superintendent engineer Narayana Naika and others were present.

Bengaluru's new way to tune in

These listening sessions typically use analogue players and focus on a single artiste or album

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

A listening session at The Middle Room, Double Road.

A listening event hosted by On The Jungle Floor in April 2022.

Live music may be picking up once again in Bengaluru, but city folk are turning their attention to a new form of music consumption and appreciation. A number of venues in the city are hosting 'listening sessions', with a singular focus on artistes, technicality, and musicality. The trend is driven by the post-pandemic need to slow down and to be able to touch and feel art, experts say.

"The aim of these sessions is to allow listeners to experience the music as the artiste intended," says Isaac Nico, a documentary photographer, who hosted a session on Puerto Rican artiste, Bad Bunny, at Bar Cameo, Kasturba Road last weekend.

Some say that listening bars were born in post World War-2 Japan, a time when its citizens could not afford a record player and would gather at bars to enjoy music from the records American soldiers had left behind. "Today, we have analogue listening bars all over the world," notes Akhila Srinivas, who runs The Middle Room on Double Road.

Terrace beginnings

Akhil Hemdev of On The Jungle Floor, Indiranagar recalls the first listening event he hosted. It was on someone's terrace, back in 2022. The album they played was D'Angelo's 'Voodoo', released in 2000. He followed it up with another session playing Cleo Sol's 2020 album 'Rose in the Dark'. "When we realised this format had takers, we started hosting sessions at venues like Indiranagar Social and Max Mueller Bhavan, Indiranagar," Hemdev shares. The online record store finally opened its offline shop in 2025. The small store, equipped with a turntable and speakers, can accommodate 10-15 people at once and has been hosting listening events since they opened.

Streaming platforms offer easy access to music from across the world. But the sound is often compromised. Playing the same track on an LP or vinyl record, one of the main draws of a listening session, offers a more distilled experience, something discerning listeners are ready to pay good money for.

While analogue players are key, it follows that the sound system should be too. Middle Room was built with the specific purpose of offering music experiences. The space is equipped with speakers from Danley Sound Labs, a US-based small batch manufacturer. It is run by an ex-NASA scientist who makes them by hand. Analogue mixers and an acoustically treated room are the other features. "Even the needle used in the LP players are handpicked to be precise," says Akhila.

Bad Bunny to Ilaiyaraaja

The sessions are guided by a moderator, often a musician, a super fan or an expert on the subject. Nico, for instance, spent a month in Puerto Rico and wrote a thesis on the connection between Puerto Rican art and resistance. Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, better known as Bad Bunny, recently sparked controversy with his Super Bowl Halftime show in the US. He performed in Spanish, highlighted the political climate in Puerto Rico and allegedly criticised President Donald Trump. Detractors, mainly Trump sympathisers, were up in arms because it was not "American enough".

His latest album, 'DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS' ('I Should Have Taken More Photos'), released in January 2025, which was played at the Bar Cameo listening session, touches upon themes such as love and nostalgia, while also addressing heavier topics like Puerto Rico's political status, gentrification, and the importance of preserving local culture. Nico broke down the historical significance, music, and lyrics of some of the songs.

Moderators also point to the unique features of the music, such as an unusual beat or the way the symphony changes. "It enables listeners to pay closer attention and understand the music better," Akhila points out.

Launchpad

Listening parties also serve as platforms for album launches. A month ago, celebrated British group Gorillaz soft launched their latest album 'Parvath, The Mountain', at listening parties across the world. In South India, they picked Ram's Musique Experience as the venue. "About 180 people showed interest so we hosted three sessions accommodating 60 people in each," recalls Sangeeth Ram, who runs the M G Road store along with his father Ramachandran. Ram's typically hosts about 3-4 sessions a month, as do other venues. "However, we are taking a break after the Gorillaz sessions," says Sangeeth, whose earlier sessions have focused on musicians like Ilaiyaraaja and Taylor Swift. Middle Room has also hosted Ilaiyaaraja sessions in addition to Pink Floyd and The Beatles.

Akhila and Sangeeth noted that all their sessions are fully booked out. Nico's session at Bar Cameo, with a capacity of 40, sold out almost a week before the event. "People want that shared experience of listening to an album together. With multiple streaming platforms like Spotify and YouTube Music, it has become a largely individualistic experience. Earlier, we would enjoy this shared experience at popular bars like Pecos or NASA. Bars these days do not pay much attention to their music curation and even if they do, the sound is below par," says Akhila.

POPCORN

Hello paw

An unusual romance in Bengaluru led to high drama. When a cat delivered four kittens, its owner went clawing after a neighbour whose male cat roams the neighbourhood. The fight over who should take care of the kittens was bitter. While paternity and custody were being discussed, the police stepped in and handed over the fur balls to a third party. See, the cops sometimes have to sort out purr-sonal problems. Good to take these in your stride meow on.

EVENTS

Art workshop and sale

Dakahavisa will celebrate World Art Day with an artists' workshop and sale of paintings at Venkatappa Art Gallery, Kasturba Road, on April 15, 10 am to 4 pm. Entry free.

Book discussion

Author Paromita Vohra will discuss her book 'Love, Sex and India: The Agents of Ishq Anthology' with moderator Thommen Ollapally, on April 18, 6 pm, Champaca, Vasanth Nagar. To register, visit champaca.in

Lecture series

Azim Premji University, as part of its Public Lecture series, is hosting a talk by historian Sanjeev Chopra, titled 'Delimitation and its Multiple (Dis)contents'. On April 15, 6.30 pm, Bangalore International Centre, Domlur. Register at bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

Coral magic

'IMAGINE: Coral Reef', an exhibition about the vibrant ecological world of coral reefs, is on at Science Gallery Bengaluru, Sanjaynagar, until May 14. For details, check bengaluru.sciencegallery.com

REUNION

The 1976 batch of Baldwin Boys' High School had a grand reunion, back at "where it all began", on April 11.

Wait, don't forward that!

Seen dramatic viral videos about the city's weather or traffic recently? Here's a quick primer on how to spot what's real

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

A screengrab of the viral clip, showing a man seemingly entranced by the "zombie drug".

Last week, a viral clip took over social media, showing a man seemingly entranced by what many dubbed the "zombie drug". The footage sparked alarm, with viewers speculating that the man was under the influence of a dangerous substance. Yet, the truth proved far less sensational when investigations revealed he had mixed prescribed medication with alcohol, and had no trace of illicit drugs in his system.

The Bengaluru Police cautioned the individual who shared the video, warning against the spread of false information and drawing attention to the wider problem of fake news online. Increasingly, such misleading videos are being generated from Bengaluru, and they often feature alleged traffic violations, "suspicious" cars, or even dramatic, unverified weather warnings that trigger unnecessary panic.

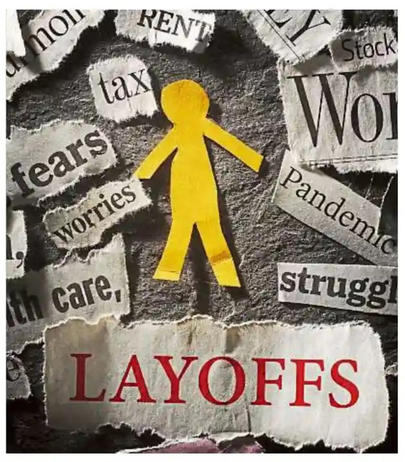
To explore how such misinformation takes root, *Metrolife* consulted experts on identifying fake news. Tanveer Hasan, from the Centre for Internet and Society, explained that fake news typically falls into two categories: "unintentional exaggeration and intentional misinformation, with the latter being more common today." He recommends checking the source, intent and meaning of the clip to get a fair idea of its veracity before forwarding or sharing widely.

Apar Gupta, advocate and founder-director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, says: "Identifying deepfakes is becoming increasingly tough as visual cues are being engineered." Experts advise that if a claim cannot be quickly traced to a credible source, treat it as unverified. Running the headline through a search engine can help. Useful tools for spotting fake news include reverse image searches and fact-check platforms.

Oracle layoffs trigger distress among techies

Counsellors are reporting more clients struggling with career-related anxiety and low self-esteem

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE



Oracle, an American IT giant, has reportedly laid off 12,000 employees in India, including those in Bengaluru.

The massive global layoffs at Oracle, including 12,000 job cuts in India, have sparked distress among tech workers across the industry. Since the March 31 development, some mental wellness platforms in Bengaluru have reported a spike in career-related calls.

A large majority of those reaching out are still employed but are anxious that they might be next to be let go. A smaller group includes those who lost their jobs at Oracle and are experiencing sleeplessness, breakdowns and low self-esteem. According to Dr Ali Khwaja of Banjara Academy, such professionals begin seeking help after about a month, as they are initially too numb to process the sudden change. He says the shock is greater in job losses than in exam results because layoffs are unexpected; what seems like a normal workday can suddenly be the last. Reportedly, employees received an email early in the morning notifying them of their immediate termination.

Around 25 working professionals, mostly over 30 or in senior roles, have reached out to Dr Khwaja's centre since the recent layoffs. Of these, one or two were directly affected but are not yet considering "serious counselling".

Compared to their previous weekly average, YourDOST saw a 150-200% rise in job loss-related conversations after the layoff announcement.

However, nearly 20 people recently laid off by the American MNC have turned to PeakMind, says its founder Neeraj Kumar. They came through referrals from clients of an executive search firm he runs, as well as his personal network. In addition, around 25 professionals from other tech companies have also approached him. Overall, more men than women are seeking help, and most are from mid- to senior-level positions.

'Why me?'

Kumar says the affected individuals are asking why it happened to them and why they didn't see it coming. "One Oracle employee broke down in tears. He is the sole breadwinner, with children in school and financial commitments. Despite 15-20 years of experience, he is unsure about (securing) his future," he says. Dr Khwaja says the crisis has also brought existing family issues to the fore, with some quarrelling over their partner not switching jobs on their advice.

The team at YourDOST says those laid off report a loss of identity and confidence, sleep problems, poor concentration, a sense of losing control, social withdrawal, and stigma around job loss. Those who remain employed report survivor's guilt, heavier workloads, performance pressure, and anxiety about future layoffs. "This shows mental health support cannot be reactive. It needs to be consistently available, especially when people are trying to make sense of what's happening around them," says cofounder and CEO Richa Singh.

Helplines

Tele MANAS: **1800-89-14416**
Nimhans Centre for Well Being: **94808 29670**

Tips to cope

Kumar, who has handled over 100 layoff cases, says that sooner or later, everyone finds a job. The key, he says, is managing the uncertain period by gaining better control over one's mind and emotions. Job hunting takes time, and he advises people to set small, realistic goals over 30, 60, or 90 days to work towards it. He also stresses staying physically active and not bottling up stress, but sharing it with family and friends.

Dr Khwaja says it is important to address repressed anger and low self-esteem, as these can surface during interviews. He also advises those in senior roles to think laterally: "Would they instead want a change of profession at this point in their career?" YourDOST helps such individuals separate identity from employment status, cope with uncertainty around careers and finances, and rebuild confidence.

Special screening of Sindhi film held

As part of the celebrations of the Sindhi Language Day, around 800 Sindhis gathered at Garuda Mall, Ashok Nagar, on Sunday, for a special screening of the Sindhi film 'Byo Cha Khape?', organised by the Sindhi Seva Samiti, a 70-year-old organisation.

President Prakash Madhwani said the idea was to bring the community together through cinema.

'Byo Cha Khape?' was screened on Sunday.

"We wanted the community to enjoy a film that has already seen packed houses across 50 cities worldwide," he said.

Sindhi Language Day marks the inclusion of the language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution in 1967, nearly 20 years after partition displaced the community. Without a geographical base, Sindhis remain scattered, making it difficult to preserve the language.

Writer Radhika D Shyam points out, "India produces the highest number of films annually. Yet, only 20 films have been made in Sindhi in 79 years." She believes commercial films like this could help revive interest.

Dirven Hazari, the film's producer and actor, a well-known YouTuber and comic, was felicitated at the event. He aims to bring together Sindhi talent and open doors for more films, he stated.

Summer camps: Going beyond classrooms

From puppetry and photography to art and animation, these activities offer children a creative break from screens

TEAM METROLIFE

The Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) on Kasturba Road is hosting summer programmes that include hands-on and exploratory sessions.

Photography camp

For children interested in looking at the world through a lens, Samantha Ross, photographer and co-founder of The Outback Experience, is offering a classroom-based learning workshop this summer. Her beginner-friendly kids' photography workshop, scheduled in batches on April 20 and 21 and May 8 and 9, is designed for ages 11 to 16. Samantha says the sessions will cover both theory and practical aspects. Participants will learn the fundamentals of photography, including how a camera works, along with key elements such as aperture and shutter speed.

For those aged 8 to 14, wildlife photographer Phillip Ross will lead a 'Young Birders Camp' on April 23 and 24, focused on birdwatching and introducing children to the basics of birding.

For details, check theoutbackexperience.in/kids-camps-workshops

Summer @ MAP

The Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) is hosting different summer programmes across age groups.

For children aged 8 to 12, the programme from May 4 to 9 offers a mix of hands-on and exploratory sessions. "It includes ceramics, mask-making, anthotype and cyanotype workshops," says Breanne Coelho from the public programmes team. A key highlight is 'Canvas City', an immersive workshop that "explores Bengaluru through arts and games". It will also feature a guided gardening walk through MAP's newly opened living botanical space.

For those aged 13 to 16, a five-day stop-motion animation workshop from May 11 to 16 will be held. Facilitated by filmmaker and animator Hansa Tapliyal, it will take participants through the entire animation process.

Camps at the Museum of Art and Photography, Kasturba Road. For details, check map-india.org

Puppet festival

The upcoming Dhaatu Puppet Santhe, now in its 16th edition, is open to ages two and above. Spread over two days, it will feature performances, interactive sessions, and guided tours of the Dhaatu Puppet Museum. Visitors can also engage in what Anupama Hoskere, founder of Dhaatu, calls "experiential puppet play".

The line-up includes shadow puppetry, chinni aata (a traditional Karnataka hand puppet form), and storytelling using puppets. A key highlight is a workshop that draws from the 'Kathasaritsagara', introducing mechanised puppets. "We will offer basic lessons in physics, such as the use of levers and mechanics in puppetry," Anupama says. A range of puppets, including string, lever-based, finger and hand puppets, will also be on sale.

April 18-19, Mandala Cultural Centre, Kanakapura Main Road. Call 98861 93999 for details.

Art camp

A five-day Summer Art Camp begins at Atta Galatta on April 21, offering a hands-on alternative to rising screen time.

Curated by artist Deepika, the camp for ages 6 to 13 will explore mediums such as canvas painting, fluid art, upcycled coconut shell art, clay work, and collage-making. All materials are included.

April 21-24 and 28, 11 am to 1 pm, Atta Galatta, Indiranagar. Call: 80505 61345.

CITY MIX

Centenary celebration

The G T Narayana Rao Centenary Celebration marks the thinker's 100th birth anniversary on Saturday. The evening will open with an introduction to his life and his work in Karnataka. It will be followed by a presentation on the initiatives of non-profit Sanchi Foundation, after which will follow a centenary lecture by science communicator Nagesh Hegde. The evening will conclude with a Karnatik vocal concert by T M Krishna.

On April 18, 5.30 pm, at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur. Entry free. RSVP to bangaloreinternationalcentre. org

Activism through art

Artist Afra Eisma's exhibition 'Warrior Garments' will be on view until June 21, at Museum of Art & Photography, Kasturba Road. It features garments made from silk and organza, with hand-painted text reflecting her activist ideas on vulnerability and care. The show explores what it means to highlight sexual violence and personal trauma through art.

Entry free. For timings and registration, visit map-india.org

13,000 poor families to lose...

Homes, From Page 1

While officials argue that the move to cancel the allotments will benefit other applicants, activists say it will only put the poor under more pressure.

"The government provides a subsidy of Rs 3.5 lakh per house while the allottee has to pay the rest. Many may not have paid due to financial distress. Some may have even taken loans to pay the initial deposit," said Issac Amrutha Raj, state president of the Slum Janara Sanghatane-Karnataka.

He also argued that the RGHCL would have earned interest on the initial deposits and said deducting 25% was "unfair".

An allottee who has not been unable to pay the balance amount said his family's financial condition had made things difficult for him. "I took a loan to pay the initial deposit. I worked as an auto driver and hoped to take another loan to pay the remaining amount. But my situation changed. My mother fell ill and my responsibilities increased. Now, it is nearly impossible for me to pay lakhs. I am already in debt," he said.

RGHCL officials said the government had facilitated bank loans for beneficiaries and even offered to subsidise interest up to 3%. However, they said the response was still poor, so the decision to cancel the allotment was taken.

Many allottees have raised concerns about the locations. These projects are located far from public transport points and connectivity is a problem. .

The houses are located in remote areas: Agrahara Palya, Bilijaji and Bethanagere (all in Yelahanka assembly segment), Anekal and Bidarahalli (Mahadevapura).

Each house costs about 8 lakh. The govt gives a subsidy of Rs 50,000 while allottees pay the rest. About 13,000 allottees have paid only the initial deposit of Rs 50,000.

BJP's Samrat to be new Bihar CM

Samrat, From Page 1

Before submitting his resignation to the Governor, Nitish held his last Cabinet meeting, wherein he recommended the dissolution of the ministry.

"It was an emotional moment for all of us when Nitish ji said he was leaving for New Delhi but would continue to guide us and keep a watch on Bihar developments," said minister Ram Kripal Yadav.

Nitish's resignation thus paved the way for the formation of the first BJP-led Government in Bihar. Nitish, who has been the chief minister of Bihar since November 2005 (barring a nine-month period from May 2014 to Feb 2015 when Jitan Ram Manjhi was the CM), took oath as the Rajya Sabha member last week.

On Tuesday, when Nitish was on his way to chair the Cabinet meeting, he asked Samrat Choudhary to accompany him. This gave some indication that Samrat was the chosen one. However, there were rumours that "enemies within the BJP" were adamant on clipping Samrat's wings.

"When Nitish came to know about it, he delayed his decision to resign, from 11 am to 3 pm, and put forth a demand that only Samrat, not Shreyasi Singh or anyone else, replace him. This alarmed the BJP leadership, who took no risk in annoying Nitish, who still commanded 85 MLAs in the Assembly, just four short of the BJP's 89," said a JD(U) source, privy to the behind-the-scenes talks.

Samrat has worked as Nitish's deputy for the last 2 years and won his confidence, besides winning the trust of Modi and Amit Shah. During the November 2025 Bihar election campaign, Shah had asked the voters to vote for Samrat as he was "destined for a big post".

"Nitish never trusted Shreyasi Singh. She is the daughter of Nitish's bete noire, late Digvijay Singh, with whom Nitish had a running feud since Samata Party days," the party source added.

High court issues guidelines on recording entries as per decree

Says failure in communication leads to flooding of litigations

BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has issued guidelines to civil and commercial courts and the registering authority on procedure to communicate the decree and to making entries in the relevant registers and indexes cancelling a registered instrument as per the decree.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum has said that failure on the part of civil courts to communicate decrees and the registering authority insisting upon communication on decree leads to unnecessary flooding of litigations and imposes an unwarranted burden on the constitutional courts.

In the case at hand, the petitioner Antony Samy K contended that despite the decree passed by the civil court annulling the general power of attorney and joint development agreement executed by him for the property owned by him, the sub-registrar, Mahadevapura refused to incorporate the changes in the encumbrance certificate. The sub-registrar issued an endorsement that the office has not received the copy of the decree.

Justice Magadum noted that Section 31(2) of the Specific Relief Act casts an obligation on the court to communicate the decree and correspondingly requires the registering authority to record the cancellation.

Rule 123 of the Karnataka Registration Rules, 1965, mandates the sub-registrar to enter a note of cancellation both in the relevant register and the corresponding index.

"The present case highlights a recurring problem faced by litigants even after obtaining decrees cancelling registered documents. The absence of a streamlined mechanism for communication between civil courts and registration offices often results in unnecessary hardship to parties," Justice Magadum said.

The court further said, "Whenever a decree is passed cancelling or declaring void a registered instrument relating to immovable property, the court shall direct the office to transmit a copy of the decree to the jurisdictional sub-registrar in whose office the document was registered."

Insofar as the sub-registrars, the court said, "Whenever a decree cancelling a registered document is communicated by a civil court, the sub-registrar shall make the required entries in the relevant register and indexes within four weeks of receipt of such communication.

"Even in cases where no formal communication is received from the court, if a party produces a certified copy of the judgment and decree declaring the registered instrument as cancelled or void, the sub-registrar shall not refuse to act upon the decree. In such cases, the sub-registrar shall verify the authenticity of the certified copy and thereafter record the cancellation in the relevant registers and indexes in accordance with the Rule 123 of the 1965 Rules."

For 33% women's quota, LS to have up to 850 seats

Women's quota, From Page 1

Besides amending Articles 81, 82 and 170 that deal with the number of seats and delimitation, the Bill also proposes changes to Article 334(A) for the early implementation of women's quota. The seats earmarked for women will be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a state or Union Territories.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill would facilitate delimitation of territorial constituencies and put in operation the provisions providing for reservation of seats for women in Lok Sabha and Assemblies.

"This will also promote women empowerment and provide opportunities for women to participate in the nation-building process. In addition, the increased representation of women in the decision-making process will promote inclusivity and help in achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat@2047," it said.

The number of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats were frozen in 1976 on the basis of 1971 Census following arguments that some states had managed to perform well in population control and they should not be at a disadvantage compared to others, especially states like Uttar Pradesh and some other north Indian states.

The freeze was till 2001 and then extended to a delimitation following the first Census after 2026.

"While the freeze of seats on the basis of population figures of the year 1971 census served an important policy purpose, the country's demographic profile has since undergone substantial changes, as reflected in the population figures of the latest published census, including significant inter-state and intra-state population shifts, rapid urbanisation and migration, and disproportionate growth in certain regions, resulting in wide disparities in the population and the constituencies," the Bill said.

If a delimitation takes place after a fresh Census, it said it will take "considerable time" and "delay the effective and dedicated participation" of women in the democratic polity.

"The objective of the proposed Bill is to operationalise" one-third reservation for women, including women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, in Lok Sabha and Assemblies through delimitation exercise to be undertaken on the basis of the population figures of the latest published census.

"Thus, the implementation of reservation of seats for women is linked to the constitutional scheme of readjustment in the allocation of seats in the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies and re-drawing boundaries of territorial constituencies by the Delimitation Commission," it added.

Heatwave conditions to intensify in state

Heatwave, From Page 1

Parts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi could receive light-to-moderate thundershowers between April 15 and 18, however, Uttara Kannada district will remain dry and humid next week.

A press release from IMD, Bengaluru, also states that there is a high possibility of thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds ranging between 30 km to 40 km/hr in most parts of north interior Karnataka during this period.

In north interior karnataka, apart from the four days of heatwaves in eight districts, Dharwad, Haveri, Ballari and Vijayanagar districts will witness hot day condition, were temperature will cross over 40° C. However, by evening, these districts can witness sporadic incidents of summer showers accompanied by gusty winds.

The World Meteorological Organisation defines a heatwave as five or more consecutive days when the daily maximum temperature exceeds the average maximum temperature by five degrees Celsius and hot day condition is defined as a day when the maximum temperature reaches 40°C plus and is at least 5°C above normal temperature.

In February, the IMD, in their long-range forecast, had predicted that Karnataka could be face six days of two heatwave periods in April and May.

Deputy commissioners of heatwave impacted districts have already issued warnings to the public to avoid venturing out between 12 noon and 4 pm and to avoid tedious works, including agriculture.

"People in heatwave areas should avoid working under direct sunlight. Prefer cotton dress and hydrate regularly and keep body cool," said Puviarasan.

Speaking to *DH*, Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj of Karnataka Priyank Kharge said Karnataka has already formulated a heatwave action plan and all the district administration has been asked to follow the guidelines that has been formulated with the help of the Indian Institute of Science.

The government has also instructed all the primary health centers to be prepared, both in terms of infrastructure and medicinal, to attend heat vulnerable patients.

LINES OF LEARNING

Children try their hand at rangoli using chalk piece during the 'chinnara mela' summer camp at theatre repertory Rangayana in Mysuru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

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Secretary: 94487-83508. I/c., M.D. 94820-03699

Ref No.SFCSML/PUBLIC AUCTION/12/2026-27. Date: 13.04.2026.

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE-NOTIFICATION DATED: 26-03-2026 THE AUCTION DATE: 18.04.2026 IS POSTPONED to 24-04-2026 - AT 12.05.P.M

Sd/- (Dr.Shivaraj R Kulkarni) I/c. Managing Director
Sd/- (P.G.Upanal) Chairman

JAYACHAMARAJA WADIYAR GOLF CLUB
Maharana Prathap Singhji Road, Nazarbad, Mysore - 570 010
Phone: 0821-2538457/2413385, Email : secretary@jwgc.in
Date: 14-04-2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Sealed tenders are invited from reputed and experienced contractors/ firms for the following works:
1. Supply, Installation, Testing & commissioning of Fire Hydrant System and Safety Signages & accessories at JWGC
2. Supply, Installation, and Maintenance of Modern Gym Equipments.
3. Civil Construction Works of a 40KLD-SRMT Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at JWGC Club House.

General Terms & Conditions:
* Application: Interested contractors/ bidders may apply for a specific project or for all three projects, provided they demonstrate relevant experience in the respective fields.
* Tender Documents: A separate tender document must be collected for each individual work from the Club Office.
* Timings: Documents are to be collected between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM before 20-04-2026.
* Document Fee: Rs. 1,000/- + GST (Non-refundable) per document.

Sd/- President, JWGC
Sd/- Hon. Secretary, JWGC

PUBLIC NOTICE - E-AUCTION
RELIABLE CASHEW COMPANY PRIVATE LIMITED IN LIQUIDATION (RCCPL)
under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

E-AUCTION
Sale of Assets under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016
Dates E-Auction: 06.05.2026 and 07.05.2026

Pursuant to the Order of the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Chennai vide its order dated 09.08.2024 in the matter of Reliable Cashew Company Private Limited (In Liquidation), the undersigned is inviting bids for sale of assets owned by RCCPL forming part of the liquidation estate under section 35(f) of IBC, 2016 .The said Assets will be sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS ", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" and "NO RECOURSE BASIS".**

The Sale will be done by the undersigned through the E-Auction platform at the web portal https://ibbi.baanknet.com/eauction-ibbi/home Brief particulars of the sale are as follows:

Set of Assets	Assets	Reserve Price (In INR)	EMD Amount (In INR)
Category A -Sale of Non-core assets (only land parcels) Date and Time of e-auction: 06.05.2026 at 05.00 PM to 06.00 PM			
Asset Set 1	All the piece and parcel of a commercial plot at Sy No. 37-1, measuring 65.50 cents situated in Marakada Village, Mangaluru Taluk within Mangaluru City Corporation in the Registration Sub-district of Mangaluru, Karnataka	78 Lakhs	7.80 Lakhs
Asset Set 2	All the piece and parcel of a commercial plot at R.S.No.110/3, measuring 3.17 Acres situated in Bramhawar, Udupi	2.25 Crores	0.225 Crores
Category B Sale of Movable Assets at leased premises Date and Time of e-auction: 07.05.2026 at 11.00 AM to 12.00 Noon			
Asset Set 3	Plant and Machinery together with a Vehicle located at D. No, 12/92 and 12/93, Padavu Post, Shakti Nagar, Kulshekar, Mangaluru, Karnataka	32.00 Lakhs	3.20 Lakhs
Category C Sale of assets individual units (Movable and immovable properties) Date and Time of e-auction: 07.05.2026 at 01.00 PM to 02.00 PM			
Asset Set 4	**Industrial Property** (Movable and immovable assets) All the piece and parcels of the land measuring 100 cents, situated at, S.No.291/9P1, Kolalgiri, Uppoor Village, Udupi Taluk, Karnataka together with building, plant and machinery, furniture & fixtures, and vehicles.	1.69 Crores	0.169 Crores
Category D-Sale of movable Assets (In case no bids are received for auction under Asset Set 4) Date and Time of e-auction: 07.05.2026 at 03.00 PM to 04.00 PM			
Asset Set 5	**Machineries and movable Assets** Machineries at S.No.291/9P1, Kolalgiri, Uppoor Village, Udupi Taluk, Karnataka along with all movable assets and vehicles	21.00 Lakhs	2.10 Lakhs
Category E Sale of Immovable Assets (E-auction only if Asset set 5 gets bids and results in a successful auction) Date and Time of e-auction: 07.05.2026 at 05.00 PM to 06.00 PM			
Asset Set 6	**Immovable Asset (Land & Building)** All the piece and parcels of the land measuring 100 cents, situated at, S.No.291/9P1, Kolalgiri, Uppoor Village, Udupi Taluk , Karnataka together with building	1.48 Crores	0.148 Crores

1. This Sale Notice shall be read with the Complete 'e-Auction Process Information Document' (Process Document) containing details of the Assets, eligibility, E-Auction Bid Form etc which is available at https://ibbi.baanknet.com/eauction-ibbi/home or can contact the Liquidator for further details.
2. Interested bidders for the respective Category(ies) and/or Set of Asset(s) are required to submit the eligibility documents and EMD on or before **04.05.2026** as provided in the Process Document through the electronic platform only
3. The Liquidator reserves the right to amend the key terms of the sale process including timelines for any or all Category(ies) and/or Set of Assets(s) being sold in the e-auction, to the extent permissible under the applicable laws and regulations. Any information about the amendments/ extensions of any of the timelines with respect to the sale process timelines for any or all category(ies) and/or Set of Assets (s) will be available on the e-auction website and communicated to the Eligible/Qualified/Successful Bidder(s).
4. Prospective bidders shall deposit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) through the Baanknet auction platform only. If the bidder is found ineligible, EMD shall be liable to be forfeited.

Nothing contained herein shall constitute a binding offer or commitment for sale of assets of the Company including Sale of the Company.

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Date: 14.04.2026
Place: Konstanz, Germany

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

No. M-TRD-29-I-OT-2026-27-04 Dt. 13.04.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager/Traction Distribution Branch, Chennai Division, Southern. Railway, Chennai -3, invites online tender from the experienced Contractors for the following works for further details, please refer to **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sl. No.	Tender No./Name of the work	Value(Rs.)	Closing date/time
	Tender No. M-TRD-29-I-OT-2026-27-04		
1.	Modification to existing OHE arrangements due to Realignment of curves for increasing speed to 130 kmph in Chennai Division.	56060845.60	04.05.2026 (15.00 hrs.)

Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer/ Divisional Railway Manager, Traction Distribution, Chennai - 3

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Please refer IIFT Website www.iift.ac.in for complete details about the programme

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Last Date to apply online for IIFT's IPM 2026-31	20th April 2026
Date of IPMAT 2025 (to be conducted by IIM Indore)	4th May 2026

For any query, contact: Ms. Meenakshi Saxena, Assistant Registrar (Academics) Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, B-21, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016

Tel. **011-39147213** E-mail:**ipm@iift.edu**
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Traction Distribution, Construction
South Western Railway, Bengaluru Cantonment

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 09.04.2026
PUB/28/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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SOUTHERN RAILWAY

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GEM Bid No. GEM/2026/B/7431472 dated: 13.04.2026

Divisional Railway Manager/Mechanical Branch/EnHM Wing/Chennai Division, Southern Railway Chennai 600003, for and on behalf of President of India invites ONLINE Tenders for the following work as per Gem Bid document given in the e-tender portal **www.gem.gov.in** The tenderer(s)/bidders intending to apply for e-tender for outsourcing of "Mechanized cleaning at Tambaram Railway Station on Manpower basis for 1461 Days and Tambaram Colony on outcome basis for 1253 Days" in Chennai Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender through portal **www.gem.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted. The cost of EMD can also be paid through online in Gem portal as per bid document.

Description	Mechanized cleaning at Tambaram Railway Station on Manpower basis for 1461 Days and Tambaram Colony on outcome basis for 1253 Days
Location	**Tambaram Railway station and Tambaram colony**
Tender value	**Rs.21,37,06,967.48**
Earnest Money Deposit	**Rs.12,18,530/-**
Period of completion	**04 Years**

Tender closing date and time: 04.05.2026 17:00 Hrs.
The details of tender value, EMD value are given in e-portal **www.gem.gov.in** for details bid submission, please refer to web portal **www.gem.gov.in**

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Thanksgiving

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Posthumous Bharat Ratna for BGS sought

BENGALURU, DHNS: Congress lawmakers Sharath Bachegowda and Dinesh Gooligowda on Tuesday urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to recommend a posthumous Bharat Ratna for Balagangadharanatha Swami, who was the pontiff of Adichunchunagiri Mutt.

The petition stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to visit the Mutt in Mandya district to inaugurate the 'Bhairavaikya Mandira'. "On this significant occasion, we request the State Government to immediately pass a Cabinet resolution recommending the conferment of the Bharat Ratna to His Holiness and forward the proposal to Central Government," the petition stated.

Man kills minor son

▸ **VIJAYAPURA, DHNS:** A man from Nagatana in the taluk killed his son by pushing him into a river in Maharashtra. Mallikarjun Arakeri has confessed to police of killing his son since the latter lacked his (father's) physical features. He committed the crime at Karad in Maharashtra on March 16, police said.

Cabinet reshuffle: 25 MLAs decide to stay put in Delhi

To return to Bengaluru only after meeting party top brass

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Despite warning from KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, a group of Congress MLAs has decided not to return to Karnataka until they meet AICC General Secretaries K C Venugopal (Organisation) and Randeep Singh Surjewala (incharge Karnataka), to press their demand for a Cabinet reshuffle.

A group of 25 MLAs is camping in the national capital for the past two days to meet the party top brass with demand to rejig the Cabinet in the Siddaramaiah-headed government.

On Tuesday some of the MLAs left for Ayodhya as both Venugopal and Surjewala will arrive in the city on Wednesday.

Chief Whip and senior Congress MLA Ashok Pattan told reporters on Tuesday that they had travelled to the national capital after obtaining permission from both Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DCM Shivakumar.

When asked about Shivakumar's warning to the MLAs, Pattan said, "We have not violated party discipline. We came to Delhi within party norms to meet the senior leaders. During the formation of the Siddaramaiah-led government, Surjewala had promised that a Cabinet reshuffle would be carried out after two and half years and new faces would be inducted. As the government is completing three years in May this year, we have come to remind the party leadership of that promise."

He said 25 MLAs are already in Delhi and another five will join them soon.

The legislators are expected to meet Venugopal and Surjewala on April 15. Pattan asserted that they will not return to Bengaluru without meeting both leaders.

Some MLAs met AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday night. Pattan, considered close to Siddaramaiah, said Kharge promised to look into their demand as he was aware of the performance and activities of every minister in Karnataka.

Earlier, in Bengaluru, Shivakumar had expressed displeasure over the MLAs' visit to Delhi. He said the timing was not appropriate — especially with the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections approaching — and urged party members to maintain discipline. He cautioned the MLAs against making unnecessary public statements that could invite disciplinary action.

While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's camp is pushing for a Cabinet reshuffle, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is eyeing the chief minister's post, is opposed to the reshuffle.

Currently, two Cabinet berths are vacant due to the resignation of K N Rajanna and B Nagendra.

Health dept issues advisory on menu for govt events

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state health department has issued a nutrition advisory for the staff of government offices, functions and gatherings. The department has recommended different menus for in-office meetings, eateries within government office campuses and government events.

For in-office meetings, the department has recommended millet-based snacks low in fat and oil, fresh cut fruits or vegetable salads or sprouts, nuts such as badam or walnut - roasted and not salted. The other recommendations include seeds such as sunflower, pumpkin or flax seeds and green tea or low-fat buttermilk.

The plastic bottled water for all instances have been banned and only locally filtered or boiled water either served in glass bottles or steel flask is recommended.

For government events, the department has insisted on using brown rice instead of white rice. One local dish and local cuisine must be on the menu along with at least two millet-based dishes, freshly cut vegetables or fruits and in case of non-veg, only well-cooked lean or white meat must be served, the order read.

A similar menu with either boiled horse-gram, chickpea or corn and low-fat sugar beverage are to be included in the menu of eateries on government office campuses. The government has also advised against serving micro-wave heated or cooked food, industrially processed food, high fat, oil, spiced food, fried snacks, carbonated water drinks, high-sugar fruit juices, alcohol based beverages, milk coffee and tea.

Internal quota: Decision after polls, says DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Shivakumar

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday reassured Scheduled Caste (SC) leaders that the government will take a decision on internal reservation after the elections to various states.

Shivakumar was speaking at the Ambedkar Jayanti event organised by the Karnataka Congress.

"We've demonstrated our commitment towards internal reservation. We decided on the 6-6-5 formula. But the court has asked us to restrict Scheduled Castes reservation to 15%," Shivakumar, the Karnataka Congress president, said.

"BJP and others will try to mislead you. For us, all Scheduled Castes are one. There's no need to fight for half a per cent or one per cent. All of you are in the 15% bracket. Did Ambedkar tell you to fight amongst yourselves for internal reservation?" Shivakumar said.

"Reservation is the property of the Congress. It's a Congress programme," he said.

PM to visit Mandya district today

▸ **NAGAMANGALA (MANDYA DIST), DHNS:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate Guru Bhairavaikya Mandira at Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Nagamangala taluk of Mandya district on Wednesday.

Modi will be the first PM to visit the Mutt. He will arrive in a helicopter from Bengaluru at 10 am on April 15 and land at the helipad at the Tapovana in Adichunchaniri.

Later, he will offer prayers at Kala Bhairava temple and inaugurate the Bhairavaikya Mandira, said a press release.

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Rayaraddi bats for new faces in Cabinet

KUKANUR (KOPPAL DIST), DHNS: Economic Advisor to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Yelburga MLA Basavaraj Rayaraddi on Tuesday called for the replacement of 25 incumbent ministers in the Cabinet with new faces.

In an interaction with reporters, Rayaraddi batted for induction of new faces into the Cabinet. "They will get invaluable experience. How will it be fair if those in the Cabinet continue to remain in office? There's nothing wrong in young leaders asking for an opportunity to serve in the Cabinet," said Rayaraddi. Despite having won multiple elections, he had not been given a Cabinet post, pointed out Rayaraddi.

"I have been made economic advisor to CM, a post in which I can, at best, offer suggestions and do my bit, so that a good budget is presented. But I have no real power. The decision of inducting me into the Cabinet is left to high command," he said.

The CM, KPCC chief and senior leaders will discuss possibility of a Cabinet reshuffle after May 4, he said.

GBA polls could be delayed as SEC's work drags

GBA polls, From Page 1

However, the government maintained that this delay was administrative in nature.

Importantly, the affidavit underlines that the poll body does not require the ward reservation list to proceed with preparatory steps such as finalising the electoral roll.

According to the affidavit, the SEC had scheduled to complete the ward-wise electoral rolls by March 16.

"Since the SEC does not require a reservation list of wards until final publication of ward-wise electoral roll, the delay in publishing ward-wise reservation has not affected the election process," it states. The state government has completed all its responsibilities, including publishing the final ward reservation without affecting the election process, the affidavit notes, urging the court to take the status report on record.

Electoral roll

In January this year, the SEC had published the draft electoral roll, which comprised 88.91 lakh voters. Following complaints of discrepancies in the voters' list, the commission published an updated draft electoral roll on March 9. The number of voters went up by a miniscule margin of about 1,117 voters. Subsequently, the SEC extended the deadline to file objections to the electoral roll twice. Now, it is expected to be published on April 16.

Sources said the SEC, just like the UDD, may have to file an affidavit of status report to the Supreme Court in the backdrop that it had committed to hold the civic body elections by June-end. The rumour mill is that the commission may seek an extension of time to hold elections, as it depends on the same set of people who are already burdened with activities relating to the National Census 2027 and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll.

SEC commissioner GS Sangreshi did not respond to calls.

CM fires Naseer Ahmed as political secretary

He 'worked against Cong' in Davangere South byelection

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has let go of his political secretary Naseer Ahmed, who is accused of working against the Congress during the April 9 Davangere South bypoll.

Ahmed, an MLC, was appointed as Siddaramaiah's political secretary in June 2023. The notification appointing him to that post has been withdrawn. Accordingly, Ahmed has been "relieved from the post with immediate effect," a new notification by the protocol wing of the department of personnel & administration reforms has said.

It is said that Siddaramaiah sacked Ahmed based on a directive from the Congress high command. Apparently, Ahmed was unwilling to resign on his own. On Monday evening, Congress' Muslim workers from Kolar visited Ahmed's residence and urged him not to quit.

Last week, Congress MLC Abdul Jabbar quit as the chairperson of the party's minorities department.

Ahmed, Jabbar and Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan have been accused of being involved in attempts to sabotage the Congress' election effort in Davangere South. They wanted a Muslim to get the bypoll ticket, which was given to the late MLA Shamanur Shivashankarappa's grandson Samarth.

Reacting to this, Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar said Ahmed faced action based on "information" gathered by Siddaramaiah from various sources.

"Party discipline is more important. Ahmed was asked to go to Davangere South and get the rebel candidate to retire. He didn't show up. The CM has his own inputs," Shivakumar said.

There is speculation that Zameer may also face action by way of being dropped from the Cabinet. To this, Shivakumar said: "I don't know about that."

With this, Siddaramaiah is left without any political secretaries. Congress MLC K Govindaraj was fired as the CM's political secretary in June 2025 in the wake of the stampede outside the Chinnaswamy stadium that killed 11 persons.

Ashoka to Cong: Stop appeasement at least now

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka asked Congress to stop 'minority appeasement' politics in the backdrop of developments surrounding the Davangere South bypoll.

"Muslims will vote for Congress only as long as there's no alternative available. Congress must understand this harsh reality," Ashoka said in a tweet. "At least now, Congress leaders must wake up, stop politics of appeasement and focus on development".

High-profile exits

K N RAJANNA, MADHUGIRI MLA
Sacked from the Cabinet on 11 August, 2025, for criticising the Congress' 'Vote Chori' campaign.

B NAGENDRA, BELLARY MLA
Resigned as minister on June 6, 2024, in connection with embezzlement of Rs 89.62 crore at the Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation.

K GOVINDARAJ, MLC
Removed as CM's political secretary on June 6, 2025, for reportedly pushing for the felicitation of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team for winning the IPL trophy 2025 on the grand steps of the Vidhana Soudha, on a day when 11 people died due to a stampede.

ABDUL JABBAR, MLC
Quit as chairperson of the Congress' minorities department on April 11, 2026, due to 'sidelining of Muslim leaders' in the party.

NASEER AHMED, MLC
Fired as CM's political secretary on April 13, 2026, in the wake of allegations that he was involved in attempts to sabotage the Congress' election effort in the Davangere South byelection.

With this, Siddaramaiah is left without any political secretaries. Congress MLC K Govindaraj was fired as the CM's political secretary in June 2025 in the wake of the stampede outside the Chinnaswamy stadium that killed 11 persons.

Bypoll sabotage row: Zameer meets CM, explains himself

Says could not spend enough time in Davangere as he was 'star campaigner' in Kerala

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday sought an explanation from Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan on allegations of 'internal sabotage' during the April 9 Davangere South bypoll.

Speaking to reporters before meeting Siddaramaiah, Zameer maintained that Muslim leaders in the Congress were united. "But such (allegations) are common in politics. Some (who have levelled allegations) are trying to become ministers," he said.

On April 10, a day after polling in Davangere South, Government Chief Whip Saleem Ahmed and Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad told a news conference that senior Muslim leaders in the party attempted to sabotage the Congress' bypoll effort. They did not take names, but all fingers pointed to Zameer, Congress MLCs Abdul Jabbar and Naseer Ahmed, who wanted a Muslim candidate. Instead, the party fielded late MLA Shamanur Shivashankarappa's grandson Samarth.

Zameer conceded that Muslim voters in Davangere South were upset. "But later, things became alright and the Congress will win with a good margin," he insisted.

"On March 20, there was a meeting attended by AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and all local Davangere leaders. There, I said that a Muslim must get the ticket. There were seven applicants and I said any one of them can be considered. I also said that I'd resign as a minister if I don't ensure the party's victory. I had said this during the Shiggaon bypoll, too, when a Muslim candidate was fielded," Zameer explained.

Zameer said he could not spend much time canvassing in Davangere South as he was designated 'star campaigner' in Kerala. "Still, I requested K C Venugopal and visited Davangere where I held a roadshow," he said. Miffed with the party, Jabbar quit as the chairperson of the minorities department last week.

"I spoke to Jabbar. He said (minister) S S Mallikarjun (the candidate's father) visited his neighbour, but not his home. He was hurt," Zameer said. Jabbar himself was a ticket aspirant. "Yes, but Jabbar still has three years left as MLC. So, we asked for someone else to be given the ticket," Zameer said.

On allegations that Naseer deliberately did not visit the constituency, Zameer said: "CM had tasked Naseer with the Bagalkot bypoll. He spent 10 days there."

Trump dials Modi; briefs him on West Asia crisis

Trump, From Page 1

The call ended with Trump telling PM Modi that: "I just want you to know we all love you", according to ambassador Gor.

"We do have some big-ticket items that will be announced over the next few days or the next few weeks, and the relationship is on a firm footing. We will have something very interesting and exciting," he said.

Collaboration with US firms

Sources said certain Indian public sector companies in the energy sector may announce collaborations with American firms in the coming days.

On the Modi-Trump discussion on West Asia, Gor said the US President wanted to update the prime minister on the overall situation in the region.

"You have a nation that is holding the entire world hostage. These are international waterways. There are international treaties," the envoy said, referring to Iran blocking the movement of ships through the Strait of Hormuz that has resulted spike in energy prices.

"There's only one reason that prices (of oil and gas) have gone up (and that) is because somebody is holding this area hostage.

"So obviously the United States wants to open this waterway. And so, I think it benefits the whole world, including here in India," he said.F

Naval blockade

Gor said PM Modi and President Trump also discussed the US naval blockade of Iran's ports. He refused to answer questions on any fresh talks between Iran and the US after the collapse of the negotiations in Islamabad.

"It's not for me to announce any future talks. They did talk about the blockade and the importance of it reopening as soon as possible. Frankly, this whole region, the whole world is suffering because of this," he said.

"Why should one country be able to turn off the lights anywhere else in the world? It's unfair. It needs to stop, and the United States is determined to make that happen," he added.

The call between the two leaders came two days after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri wrapped up a three-day visit to Washington DC.

Both sides have been working to stabilise the ties after a spell of uncertainty and strain.

The relations witnessed a major downturn after Washington imposed punitive tariffs on India and President Trump made controversial assertions regarding his role in de-escalating the India-Pakistan military clashes last May. However, both sides made efforts in the last few months to repair the ties.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit India next month to hold wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and other functionaries of the government.

Joyalukkas expands its global footprint with new showroom in Sydney

Joyalukkas launched its first showroom in Sydney, Australia. It was inaugurated by Bollywood actor and brand ambassador Kajol Devgan. This is the 12th country the brand has a presence in.

Among the guests who attended the inauguration were Dr Andrew Charlton, Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and Digital Economy, and Councillor Sameer Pandey, elected representatives from Parramatta.

Joyalukkas' CEO John Paul Joy Alukkas and Director of International Operations Sonia Alukkas were present at the event. The new Sydney showroom is designed to offer a world-class shopping experience, featuring a vast collection of traditional and contemporary designs that have made the brand a household name across the globe.

Curated by DH Brandspot

HDK calls upon women in JD(S) to be more active in politics

BENGALURU, DHNS

Union Minister and state JD(S) president H D Kumaraswamy on Tuesday exhorted the women in his party to take on a more proactive role in politics.

"There are fewer women leaders in our party compared to the BJP and Congress. Women are very active in those parties. I request women workers in our party to strengthen the organisation in their respective areas," said Kumaraswamy, who participated in the birth anniversary celebrations of Dr B R Ambedkar organised at the JD(S) office here.

Pointing out that the number of Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka was likely to increase to 42 by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, Kumaraswamy said, "As much as 33% of those seats will be reserved for women. As many as 116 seats in the Assembly will be reserved for women, and we'll have to beg women candidates to contest in the elections".

Responding to reports of his possible return to state politics, Kumaraswamy said, "I have been visiting Karnataka with the elections in mind. There is no need to speculate about my visits to the state. If I sit in New Delhi or tour the country, who will look after the party? I am also the president of the party's Karnataka unit. After May 20, I will be in the state for two to three days to strengthen the party".

He called upon unemployed youngsters in Karnataka to launch a statewide agitation demanding jobs.

"Just protesting in Dharwad is not enough. Youngsters must stage demonstrations across the state," the former chief minister said.

Avenues

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Cash scandal: No closure in resignation

Justice Yashwant Varma's resignation as a judge from the Allahabad High Court last week has made impeachment proceedings against him in parliament infructuous. But important questions around the events that led to the investigation against him remain unanswered. Varma has also formally withdrawn from the proceedings before an inquiry committee constituted by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to examine the charges against him. While he tendered his resignation to the President, in a letter to the committee, he said "a fair inquiry" was not being conducted.

A large stash of unaccounted cash was found, in a burnt state, at Varma's residence in New Delhi last year, when he was a judge at the Delhi High Court. It is still unknown whose cash it was. An in-house committee constituted by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna reported that the cash could not have been placed in the storeroom at the residence without the tacit or active consent of Justice Varma or his family members. The CJI gave Varma the option to resign from office, but Varma refused; Khanna then wrote to the Prime Minister recommending the judge's removal from office. The implications of the incident are not limited to the reputation of a judge. Varma's statements regarding the incident have been unconvincing, and he has shifted positions. Getting to the truth of the charges is important for the stature and credibility of the judiciary.

The judge's move halts impeachment proceedings, but must not bury questions on judicial accountability

The key questions are: Whose cash was found at the judge's residence? What do the investigation's findings say about the source? If Varma's adversaries planted the money, as the judge claimed, why is he not seeking a probe to identify them? Considering that he is an ordinary citizen now, with no immunity derived from his office, he needs to be questioned on the matter. The Supreme Court should take the initiative on this interrogation because the credibility, accountability, and transparency of the judiciary are involved. No judge has been impeached in the country, though at least four others have faced impeachment proceedings. Since no impeachment move has reached its logical end, this may be the time to re-examine the effectiveness of the existing mechanism. Resignation should not provide an escape route for the judges. There is greater focus now than ever on the independence of the judiciary and the conduct of judges. The nation has the right to answers, as an erosion of public trust in the judiciary risks weakening democracy.

Over two decades, a State-enabled fraud

The Karnataka High Court's verdict directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe a land acquisition in Hebbal and Amanikere village is a necessary judicial intervention in a case that lays bare the deep entanglement of State power and private gain. In a scathing judgment, Justices D K Singh and Tara Vitasta Ganju termed the episode a "monumental fraud" and quashed the notification for the acquisition of 55 acres. The land was acquired in 2004 by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) in favour of a private entity, Lakeview Tourism Corporation, that did not even exist at the time of the application. It was incorporated only in 2011. Despite promising a Rs-250 crore investment and 2,000 jobs, its financials revealed a net worth of Rs 8.6 lakh and zero operational income. Crucially, the Bench reiterated the settled principle that fraud vitiates all proceedings, rejecting the state's argument that earlier judicial orders had granted "finality" to the acquisition. It also flagged that the State High Level Committee cleared the proposal within five days, without due diligence.

The court observed that "State instrumentalities themselves were involved in committing the fraud," and that the state machinery was misused to "deprive landowners of their valuable property for a pittance" to benefit a non-existent entity. Equally disturbing is how successive governments across party lines allowed this illegal arrangement to persist, even permitting a shift from a tourism project to a lucrative integrated township in 2023, despite no progress for over two decades. Perhaps the most telling aspect is the government's refusal to accede to the request of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) for 45 acres of the acquired land to build a multi-modal transport hub and interchange for three metro lines. While landowners were offered a paltry sum as compensation earlier, BMRCL came forward with a Rs 500-crore package. Yet, it was forced to scale down its demand to nine acres.

The court-directed CBI probe and follow-through action must restore accountability and public purpose

The CBI inquiry must extend beyond officials to politicians across regimes who enabled this fraud. With the acquisition now quashed, the fate of the proposed transport hub hangs in the balance. The government would do well to avoid appealing to the Supreme Court, which would only prolong uncertainty. Instead, it should adopt a course correction: scrap the private project, file a review petition to retain only the land genuinely required for public infrastructure, and ensure fair compensation. In the end, restoring public purpose must take precedence over salvaging a tainted deal.

COSTS OF RESTRAINT

Has India lost a geopolitical edge to Pakistan?

Amid the war-induced economic vulnerabilities, low-key diplomacy may limit India's agency as a stakeholder

DEEPANSHU MOHAN AND SAKSHAM RAJ

Operation Epic Fury, launched in late February, has been ongoing for more than a month with no clear solution in sight. The conflict has created an unprecedented situation where Pakistan has emerged as a central actor in the ceasefire negotiations, much to New Delhi's strategic discomfort.

Earlier this week, Islamabad hosted peace talks between Tehran and Washington, with United States Vice President J D Vance himself in attendance for talks which are the highest level of engagement between these two countries in decades.

With Pakistan's Foreign Minister saying that Islamabad will continue to facilitate talks between the two countries, this raises a critical question for New Delhi. Could India have, at the very least, demonstrated diplomatic intent as a potential mediator in the high-stakes peace negotiations? In essence, the question finds grounding due to India's macroeconomic position within the conflict. The West Asian crisis may impose a fiscal burden of nearly Rs 2 lakh crore on New Delhi, while fears of rising inflation and a growth slowdown have already been predicted; Goldman Sachs projects a forecast of 5.9% from 6.4% in FY27.

Against this backdrop, India risks becoming a key stakeholder with little diplomatic agency to limit the strategic and economic spillover effects, while Islamabad enjoys an episode of exalted diplomatic visibility in a region of global spotlight. This appears less as restraint and could be interpreted as a gap in its global governance — a red line for a country positioning itself as an emerging superpower.

Pakistan, a neighbour to the conflict-ridden region, becomes central to the ceasefire negotiations less in light of its innate influence and more due to Washington's strategic preference for engaging Islamabad. The US, a major source of foreign direct investment, has also been a prominent export destination for the "mediator" country. In trade, Pakistan runs a surplus of $1.3 billion, while American investors have emerged as crucial in the past two decades. The implication is clear: Washington retains influence over the negotiation process, as a Pakistan so integrally dependent on the US offers a controlled channel of engagement.

The upside is highly rewarding: The White House preserves its control of the conflict even outside the battlefield while concealing the asymmetry of the negotiations with a "neutral" mediator. While the neutrality might be just for optics, the mutually tolerable profile of Islamabad cannot be ignored. Pakistan is both geographically proximate and diplomatically linked, ensuring both seamless logistics and coordination within both camps. Pakistan uniquely balances maintaining political accessibility with the White House while being sufficiently aloof from an anti-Iran coalition.

The proximity of the Pakistani establishment to Beijing secures a broader international assent for the anticipated resolution of what has become a global crisis, adding a rare strategic value for Washington.

India's operations at the Chabahar Port are guided by a $370-million investment. The terminal, envisioned to bypass Pakistan and access Central Asia, has handled over eight million tonnes of cargo since its operationalisation, reinforcing its role as a crucial avenue in India's connectivity aims.

Gwadar, embedded within the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and anchored by investments of over $50 billion in the Belt and Road Initiative, has gained renewed strategic relevance. Pakistan's emergence as a diplomatic intermediary emphasises Gwadar's geographic significance, converting it into a potential bargaining leverage with both Washington and Beijing. Infrastructure, a less visible determinant in ceasefire-brokering, has enhanced Pakistan's strategic centrality.

Chabahar remains constrained because of sanctions as well as the imminent expiry of the US waivers and a history of tariff threats linked to trade with Iran. The causal logic is clear: While Pakistan retains an edge, New Delhi prefers maintaining a calculated and reversible pause in visibility.

Doctrine of strategic autonomy

The stance taken by India in the conflicts of the past decade has revealed New Delhi's preference for stability over geopolitical visibility. The question to analyse is whether India can bear the costs of its strategic restraint.

The Indian positionality in West Asia is less episodic and more economically embedded. Around 45% of crude imports originate from West Asia, out of which 50% transit through the Strait of Hormuz, while bilateral trade with the GCC economies had reached $178.6 billion in FY2025.

This exposes India's delicate macroeconomic position in relation to West Asia. It is estimated that every $10-per barrel increase in crude prices can widen India's current account deficit by 30-40 basis points and raise inflation by 55-60 basis points. The macroeconomic expense of this conflict for India has extended to the rupee depreciating to an all-time low of 94.84 per dollar and foreign investors selling Indian shares worth a net $12.14 billion.

Despite these costs, India prefers low-visibility diplomacy and not without reason. India simultaneously maintains defence ties with the US, security cooperation with Israel, and connectivity investments with Iran – relationships that cannot be reconciled in moments of crisis.

New Delhi follows a unique doctrine of strategic autonomy that sits at an intersection of managing competing interests. This could prove detrimental in moments of conflict. The Foreign Ministry's remarks questioning India's interest in performing 'brokerage' signify an unwillingness to assume the risks associated with high-stakes geopolitical mediation.

While New Delhi continues walking the tightrope to avoid destabilising long-term partnerships, it faces a choice between remaining a stakeholder with no agency that absorbs shocks or switching roles to shape regional outcomes.

(Deepanshu is Professor and Dean at O P Jindal Global University and a visiting professor at LSE and University of Oxford; Saksham is a research analyst with the Centre for New Economics Studies at the university)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Lasting memory of brief encounters

Just listening to S R Ramaswamy was a lesson in deep erudition

MIRLE KARTHIK

'A towering personality,' an oft (mis) used expression, perhaps best describes, both literally and figuratively the man, who quietly, unobtrusively strode the domains of the world of letters. Tall, swarthy, heavily built, thick glasses from behind which shone a pair of eyes that exuded erudition, a gravelly rasping voice that could both deter and enchant, S R Ramaswamy, who moved on from earthly engagements to higher planes of consciousness recently was many things at once.

A deeply read scholar in Kannada and English, a journalist, an administrator, a vast reservoir of knowledge, an engaging raconteur, and much more. He exemplified the old Mysurean way of life –deep learning, simple living, an epicurean love for cultural pursuits all couched in that simple attire of cotton dhoti and shirt. When one reads his *Deevatigegalu*, painting fascinating portraits of the great men of Mysuru of yesteryears like A R Krishnashastri, Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sharma, S Srikanta Shastri, D V Gundappa (DVG) among others, the common thread that runs through the personalities profiled in the book and himself is unmissable – scholarship of high order, disdain for fame and publicity, prolific written output, diligence and thoroughness in any task undertaken and most importantly, that rare quality of humility and nobility of character. Reading this book, DVG'S *Gnapaka Chitrashale*, an illuminating series on the lives and times of great achievers of old Mysuru springs to mind.

A protégé of D V Gundappa, it would not be wrong to say that he shouldered the onerous task of preserving DVG's the legacy. The vast literary oeuvre of DVG, both in Kannada and in English found an able hand in Ramaswamy to help them see the light of day with his equally sincere and dedicated team. The Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, established by DVG himself, found itself prospering and achieving the status of a place for intellectual gatherings and study under the able stewardship of Ramaswamy. Encouraging both young and old to participate in the debates and discussions, he gave freely of his time and energy to foster the pursuit of intellectual growth.

Just listening to him was a lesson in deep erudition and profound respect for knowledge in all its varied manifestations. As Indian spirituality declares "the words and even the silence of the great ones" are ennobling. Which reminds one of the great respect and reverence he had for the saint of Holenarsipura Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Sachidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji. He would get emotional recounting the spiritual brilliance and detachment of the Swamiji, with whom he had been closely associated. Unfailingly attending the annual *aradhana* observances at the Bengaluru branch, he would show the life of the Swamiji and other noble souls was a reiteration of the principles outlined in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

From the worldly viewpoint, eighty eight is a ripe old age to move on. Nobody knows about the hereafter. My brief encounters with S R Ramaswamy are all that I cherish and reverentially remember.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Leverage technology to implement Jan Vishwas Bill

Apropos 'A law to cut the litigation clutter' (Apr 14), given the vast number of cases pending in courts across the country and the fact that the State has been the largest litigant so far, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill promises to be a game-changer. The government could have brought this much earlier, given its potential to reduce the heavy judicial load and harassment of businesses and citizens while also making it easier to do business and live and cutting wasteful expenses from meaningless litigation. The Bill thus promises larger economic and social benefits for citizens. After its enactment, the government should publicise it widely and leverage technology to ensure its seamless implementation.
Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

Ensure women's safety

Apropos 'N Chandrasekaran orders probe into TCS Nashik allegations' (Apr 14), it has stunned the country. This should serve as a wake-up call for businesses, large and small, to ensure adequate checks and balances for the safety of women employees. Businesses should foster an environment where employees, especially women, feel safe to seek redressal. The incident must be thoroughly investigated and exemplary punishment meted out to the culprits.
Vijaya Kumar, Bengaluru

Ration mangoes

Apropos 'Mangoes hit market at princely prices amid sharp decline in yield' (Apr 14), as mango farmers stare at losses and consumers at high prices, authorities concerned must initiate steps to ensure fair prices for both. They must consider controlled rates and rationed supply to prevent profiteering by middlemen.
A K Shariff, Mysuru

Transition to EVs

I refer to 'Auto LPG crisis pushes drivers' lives off balance' (Apr 14). Indiscriminate pricing of auto LPG has hit auto drivers hard. LPG prices, which were hovering around Rs 60 per litre before the West Asia conflict, have risen by over 50% and even doubled in privately operated fuel stations. The government must ensure uninterrupted LPG supply, rein in prices, and facilitate the transition to EVs.
Raghavendra A, Ballari

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

...No one can replace Nitish Kumar. All the people of the I.N.D.I.A bloc, especially we socialists, were hoping that he would become the PM of the country by staying with us. But look at the BJP's game.

Akhilesh Yadav, SP chief and MP

You're only naive once. Use it well.
Joyce Rachelle

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

When memes meet celebrity rights

Expanding the scope of personality rights to curb satire and parodic content undermines free speech

SUNDAR ATHREYA H

Jurisprudence in personality rights originated in India with the case involving the convicted murderer Auto Shankar, wherein the court held that every individual has the right to control the commercial use of their identity. The court came to the conclusion by utilising the privacy right of the celebrity under the Indian Constitution. Later cases involving personality rights jurisprudence evolved along the lines of intellectual property rights. These cases have subsumed personality rights within the existing framework of intellectual property. Personality rights essentially involve an intersection of constitutional rights with intellectual property rights and remedies prescribed under criminal law.

For instance, in 2014, actor Rajinikanth filed a case against a movie titled *Main hoon Rajinikanth* for usurping his name without permission. Singer Daler Mehndi sought to protect his personality rights against miniature dolls that resembled and sang like him. These cases indicate a misreading of celebrity identity and commercial rights. Celebrities inherently possess a right over their personality, and any commercial use of this personality has to be owned by them. Furthermore, unauthorised use of this personality indicates potential monetary loss for the celebrity.

Since Generative AI content made inroads into social media platforms, cases around the violation of personality rights have increased exponentially. High courts in India have been grappling with multiple cases related to personality rights. Many of these cases were filed by movie stars and sports personalities regarding the usurpation of their name, image, voice, and likeness, specifically citing the economic harm caused to them.

Now, a pattern is emerging where celebrities claim infringement of personality rights when "derogatory" memes are made utilising their images. Recently, cases were filed by Acharya Balakrishna and Aniruddhacharya to protect their personality rights against such memes. It is pertinent to mention that both these cases were heard *ex parte* (without hearing the other party). The argument raised in these cases suggests that satirising celebrities dilutes their personality rights.

This is extremely interesting, as personality rights, so far, have had applicability with reference to their economic rights in the creation. The rights, *per se*, do not extend to memes made about the personality. The courts have also failed to analyse how these memes affect the commercial rights or the personality rights of the celebrity.

Towards censorship?

Against this background, it becomes necessary to clarify the limits of personality rights and their application. Should personality rights extend to protect a celebrity against caricature, or should they be limited to contesting commercial exploitation? The former is a right that cannot be brought within the rubric of intellectual property by any imagination. Personality rights must be grounded in a statute, and their broad frameworks will have to be clearly defined to understand the limitations of jurisprudence. Otherwise, these rights run the risk of being extended beyond the intellectual property framework.

The courts in these instances have been swift to aid the celebrities by passing injunction orders to take down the allegedly infringing content from the social media platforms. The content typically involves parodic memes about celebrities or AI-generated material, which might have the effect of lampooning the celebrity. Intellectual property, in its present shape, extends to creative works and not necessarily to secure the person from reputational harm.

This trend is particularly disturbing because it uses a celebrity's personality rights to curb freedom of speech and expression on the internet. This heavily compromises the fundamental rights of the internet users to exercise their speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. There cannot be any restriction beyond the inherent curbs that are present in the Constitution.

The orders passed by the courts also reduce the internet to an overtly censored space that restricts even the legitimate exercise of the users' fundamental rights. The celebrity who enjoys the right over their personality cannot possibly have the selective right to approve what others speak about them, at least not within the realm of commercial rights.

When a defamation suit is filed in similar cases, the plaintiff is put through a rigorous process to prove that the content is defamatory in nature. The logic cannot be different for a meme targeted at a celebrity. Exceptions made along these lines conflict with a foundational position – intellectual property laws cannot be used to curb legitimate constitutional rights.

(The writer is an assistant professor at the KIIT Law School)

India's forgotten capitalist past and why it still shapes our economy

MOUSUMI ROY

For centuries, perhaps even millennia, the Indian subcontinent occupied a central place in global trade. Its vast 5,000-mile coastline and geographic proximity to West Asia, Africa, and East Asia made it exceptionally well-positioned for maritime trade. Such an advantage was reinforced by a long tradition of seafaring, a highly skilled artisan base, and political systems that often recognised the importance of commerce.

Rulers not only protected merchants but also frequently collaborated with them, embedding trade deeply within the fabric of Indian society. Literary, classical texts, and intellectual traditions reflect this prominence: classical texts celebrate the daring exploits of merchant sailors. At the same time, Sanskrit and Persian treatises on governance outline the duties of kings toward facilitating commerce.

Despite this commercial history, many conventional accounts of Indian business begin only with the arrival of European trading companies in the sixteenth century, as though this moment alone marked the birth of capitalism in India. Such a view obscures a much longer and more complex trajectory. In reality, two distinct but interconnected capitalist traditions had already evolved over centuries before European intervention.

One of these traditions emerged along the coasts. It was outward-looking, driven by maritime trade, and typically rooted in relatively small, autonomous port polities. These coastal economies thrived on long-distance exchange and were integrated into wider Indian Ocean commercial circuits.

The second tradition developed in the inland regions. It was oriented towards overland trade and deeply intertwined with the fiscal machinery of large empires. Merchants in these regions played a crucial role in transporting and managing the revenues, primarily land taxes that sustained powerful imperial states across the fertile plains of the Ganges and the Indus.

While inland empires understood the strategic importance of coastal trade, they often struggled to exert sustained control over maritime zones. Geographic and infrastructural constraints, such as forests, rivers, uplands, and the high cost of road-building, limited connectivity between the interior and the coast. As a result, a persistent divide emerged between the agrarian heartlands and the cosmopolitan seaboard.

Transformation occurred with the rise of Indo-Islamic empires, which extended political authority beyond the northern plains into regions such as the Deccan, Bengal, and Gujarat. By the sixteenth century, these land-based powers had begun to establish a presence in key port cities, including Surat, Masulipatnam, and Hooghly. These centres evolved into vibrant hubs of commerce, attracting merchants from across India as well as European trading companies such as the Dutch and the English East India Company.

Initially, the European presence remained marginal. The English East India Company's early footholds in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta were modest trading outposts, lacking the scale and significance of established Indian ports like Surat and Hooghly. Yet this balance would shift dramatically in the eighteenth century.

The decline of the Mughal Empire marked a second major turning point in India's economic history. As imperial authority weakened, merchant capital began to flow out of the interior and into the relatively secure and commercially dynamic Company-controlled port cities. This migration drained inland regions of financial resources and entrepreneurial talent while fostering new Indo-European commercial partnerships along the coast.

It led to the emergence of a new kind of political entity: a seaboard state governed by a merchant corporation, the East India Company, which operated with the tacit support of segments of the Indian mercantile community. For the first time in Indian history, the coastal economy became the dominant centre of both political and economic power.

This shift initiated a gradual reorientation of the economy. Coastal-based capital began to penetrate and reshape the agricultural interior. During the nineteenth century, firms based in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras organised the export of commodities such as cotton, wheat, indigo, rice, and opium from the hinterland to global markets. These trading profits were reinvested in industrial ventures, particularly textile manufacturing, marking the transition from mercantile to industrial capitalism.

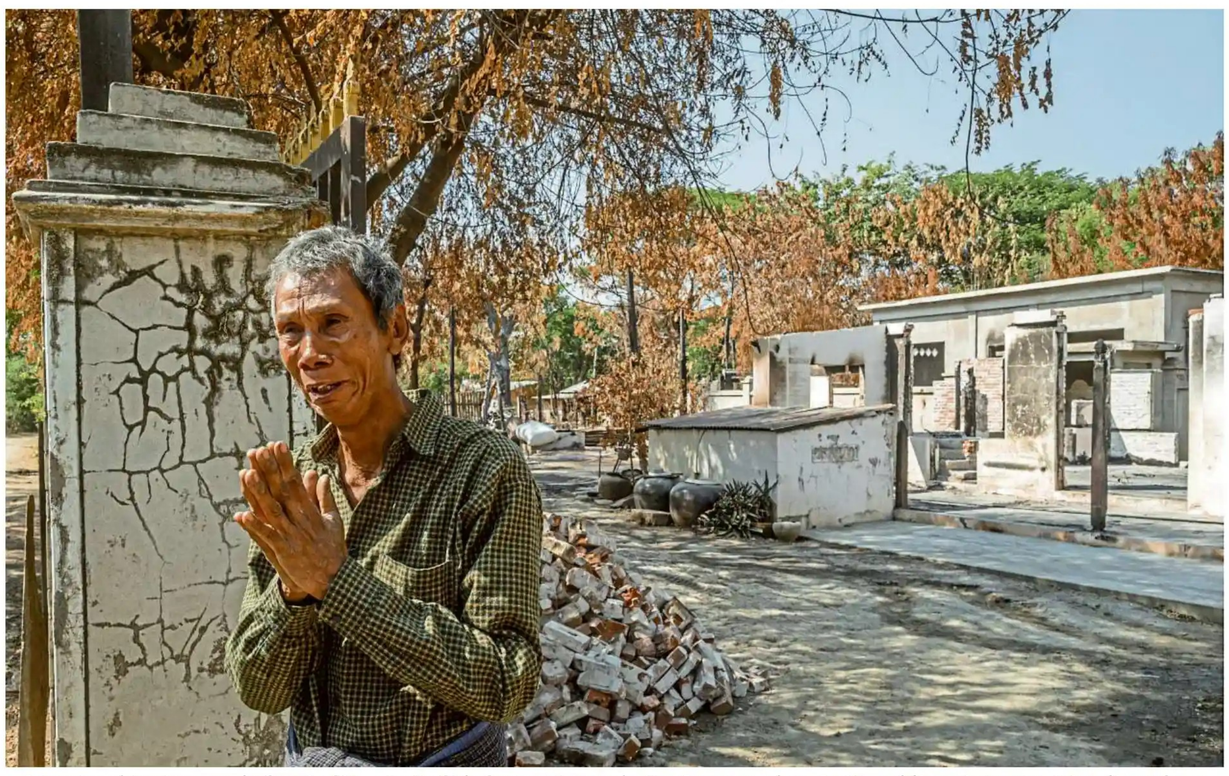
In the early twentieth century, Indian capitalists had become not merely economic actors but political ones. As the economic foundations of British rule began to weaken in the 1920s, many among the emerging business elite lent financial and institutional support to the nationalist movement. Their aspirations for economic autonomy and national development found expression after independence in 1947 through the Nehruvian model of "self-reliance". This strategy curtailed the role of foreign trade and significantly expanded the influence of domestic business groups that had matured during the colonial period.

By the late twentieth century, India liberalised its economy and re-engaged with global markets, in many ways returning to patterns that had characterised its earlier commercial history. The success of this renewed openness rested on a combination of enduring and newly acquired strengths. It drew upon India's longstanding cosmopolitan trading traditions. It was supported by post-independence transformations such as the Green Revolution and the consolidation of democratic political institutions.

(The author writes about politics, material culture, and economic history)

When Myanmar's generals staged a coup five years ago, they ignited a raging civil war and brutalised the country. But they have come to dread garlands as a sign of resistance

HANNAH BEECH



A local resident weeps in front of the shell of his former home, in the Anyar region. As the military takes back territory from resistance forces, its soldiers sweep through villages, dousing homes with fuel and littering the ground with landmines. NYT

Where even flowers stoke fear

The red and gold sign at the main entrance to the Defence Services Academy of Myanmar, a nation ruled by military fiat for most of its existence, displays its self-regard: "The Triumphant Elite of the Future."

But there is no longer any elite, triumphant or otherwise, swaggering around town. Cadets from this and other military academies in Pyin Oo Lwin, in central Myanmar, are cloistered inside their campuses, the targets of occasional rocket attacks from rebels in the hills. So anxious are the schoolmasters that military insiders say they are drawing up plans to move the academies to safer grounds.

When Myanmar's generals staged another coup five years ago, they ignited a raging civil war. They shattered the country, bequeathing it with the most fractured conflict on Earth. But more than anything, the military — even as it now boasts of the trappings of civilian rule — has created a State guided, ruled and consumed by fear.

During three weeks of reporting in Myanmar, travelling through the nation's central heartland, *The New York Times* photographer Daniel Berehulak and I saw how terror comes for everyone — and how it has disfigured a nation that barely a decade ago seemed a counterpoint to the global crescendo of authoritarianism.

In Myanmar today, civilians are petrified by the military's relentless bombing and burning campaign, which last year made the Southeast Asian nation the most severely affected by conflict on Earth, after Palestinian territories, according to the conflict monitor ACLED. They are panicked by a conscription law that can dispatch any young man or woman to the front lines. They are nervous every time a soldier at a checkpoint demands to see a phone, lest an offhand message or meme land them in prison. This is a country of averted gazes and unanswered questions. People speak in code, or not at all.

The military, too, is frightened, despite its toppling of an elected government in February 2021 and its camouflaging of top officers with civilian clothes. A spree of assassinations by pro-democracy forces who picked up arms after the coup has put a bull's-eye on anyone wearing a uniform or seen as collaborating with the generals. Army officers who used to parade around in public, trailed by briefcase carriers, have all but disappeared. Business cronies know they are also vulnerable to purges by feuding generals. Some have decamped to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and other ports of self-exile.

From late December to late January, the junta orchestrated a series of elections in which no true opposition could challenge the military's proxy party. The largest democratic force in the country, which had twice trounced the army-linked party and governed Myanmar before the coup, had been dissolved. Still, the generals were antsy. They held the vote in less than half the country and warned civil servants to cast their ballots as a show of patriotism.

The elections, which led to an unsurprising victory for the military's proxy party and set up the junta leader Min Aung Hlaing to be elected president this month, were an attempt to signal to the world that Myanmar is open for business. The military needs stability and foreign investment to resuscitate a broken economy. Its media outlets hailed the return to what the army has deemed a unique national political ideology: "disciplined democracy."

But travelling through Myanmar earlier this year, we saw that fear and despair have only metastasised. Last year, more than 13,700 people were killed as the military tried to obliterate resistance to its rule, ACLED found. Aerial attacks on civilians are at a record high, with fighter jets, helicopters, kamikaze drones and even paragliders employed to kill. Common targets include schools, hospitals and houses of worship.

On January 17, as the junta was celebrating Myanmar's stage-managed return to the polls, two fighter jets dropped hundreds of pounds of bombs on a preschool and warren of shelters in a village in Anyar, as the nation's arid heartland is called. Then they strafed the village with machine-gun fire. A few days later, we walked through the wreckage, rubble crunching underfoot. Describing the destruction across the street from his home — the boom of the blasts that lingers in his head, the soft screams of a dying child — Myo San gulped and blinked back tears. "We are always scared because we don't know when they will attack us," he said. "I don't know when it will end."

A pair of rocking horses lay in the ruins of the preschool, along with a toddler's puzzle with a spot for a dove, the bird of peace.

The United Nations said that Myanmar's military unleashed more than 400 aerial attacks during the monthlong polling period.

"The profound and widespread despair inflicted on the people of Myanmar has only deepened with the recent election staged by the military," said Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for human rights.

In an interview, Gen Zaw Min Tun, the junta spokesperson, said that airstrikes by the military targeted rebel militias, not civilians. He referred to the military's bombing in December of a hospital in western Rakhine state — in which more than 30 civilians were killed, according to international human rights monitors.

"We got solid information that this hospital was used by the terrorists and that the people who were hospitalised there were not civilians," he said.

Horror does not only descend from the skies. As the military takes back territory from resistance forces or succumbs to rebel offensives, its soldiers sweep through villages, dousing homes with fuel. In Anyar, we met residents weeping over their newly lost homes. Amid the burned wreckage, troops often litter the ground with land mines. Myanmar leads the world in land mine casualties, according to a group campaigning to end the use of mines, a weapon that disproportionately kills civilians.

The misery in Myanmar's heartland, where the nation's Bamar ethnic majority is concentrated, was compounded last year by an earthquake that officially killed 4,000 people but most likely claimed far more lives. In areas of Anyar seen as supportive of the rebels, the junta has done little to clear the damage even a year later. Ancient pagodas in the former royal capital of Ava, also known as Inwa, once drew foreign tourists. They are now abandoned, their *stupas* broken, their Buddhas crushed. Locals are trying to rebuild, but nearly a quarter of the country suffers from acute hunger.

Since the coup five years ago, at least 30,800 people have been arrested in connection to political crimes, according to a prisoners' rights group. Orwellian diktats have outlawed the use of Western social media apps (for fear of people reading real news), the riding of a motorcycle by two men (for fear of them assassinating promilitary figures) and the wearing of flowers in one's hair on the birthday of the imprisoned civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi (for fear her popularity will endure through the blossoms that were her trademark).

The military has positioned itself apart from the country that it claims to defend. Its social media is siloed, its families cleaved from normal society. Within the moat of the palace in Mandalay, once home to the royal family deposed by the invading British, an army base surrounds the gilded buildings, as if proximity to grandeur will extend a golden sheen to Min Aung Hlaing, who gave up his position as military commander to become president. The few visitors to the palace complex are warned not to take photos of the soldiers — one of the few places in today's Myanmar where they can be seen in their natural habitat.

On the outskirts of Mandalay, as dusk fell on a riverside village, a broken bridge listed, evidence of last year's earthquake. Around the village shrine, only older women and young children came out to enjoy the evening breeze. Two men had been abducted and drafted when they stumbled home drunk at night, the villagers whispered. Wherever we went in Myanmar, the absence of young men was obvious. At least 2 million people from Myanmar are believed to have fled to neighbouring Thailand since the coup, many to avoid conscription.

Those who remain face terror at any time. More than 400 people were charged with contravening an election protection law. Breaches included using the word "revolution." One young man was given a 49-year sentence for protesting the polls. His brother, Ko Win, who asked to be identified by a shortened name for fear of the military, was released from prison in November. Military torture came in many forms: his body trussed like a roasted bird, army boots stomping his face, cigarettes singeing his skin. "At the time, I was a frog in their pocket," Ko Win said, his voice and hands shaking, remembering his vulnerability. "For young people in Myanmar, we don't have any hope." NYT

Who gets to have a childhood?

UPASHA KUMARI

In contemporary India, childhood is often romanticised as a universal, protected phase of innocence, curiosity, and care. Yet, a closer look at early education reveals an unequal reality. Childhood is stratified, structured, and, in many cases, denied. Step into an elite urban preschool and one encounters carefully curated spaces with low student-teacher ratios, sensory play corners, inquiry-based learning, and an emphasis on emotional well-being. Childhood here is extended, protected, and enriched. Play is not just permitted; it is pedagogically valued. Mistakes are part of learning, curiosity is cultivated, and the child is seen as an active agent.

Now contrast this with an under-resourced setting such as an anganwadi or a low-fee private school. Here, the discourse of "early learning" often translates into premature academic pressure. Children as young as three or four are made to trace alphabets, memorise numbers, and sit through rigid routines. Play becomes a luxury. The emphasis shifts from exploration to compliance and from curiosity to correctness. This contrast is not incidental. It reflects a deeper political economy of childhood.

At its core, early education in India is marked by a paradox. The same system that encourages play-based, child-centric pedagogies for the privileged often prescribes discipline-heavy, outcome-oriented learning for the marginalised. In effect, the children who most need nurturing, exploratory environments are the least likely to receive them. Why does this happen? Part of the answer lies in how we conceptualise readiness. For many under-resourced families, education is a pathway out of precarity. Schools respond by foregrounding visible, measurable outcomes like reading, writing, and counting, often at the cost of developmental appropriateness. There is a palpable anxiety. If children are not seen to be learning in conventional terms, the system is failing them. However, this anxiety produces a troubling outcome: compressed childhood.

When early education becomes synonymous with early academic performance, children are inadvertently denied the very experiences that make learning meaningful. These include play, social interaction, imagination, and emotional expression. What is presented as rigour is often a form of pedagogical violence, particularly when imposed on young children whose developmental needs are fundamentally different.

There is also a structural dimension to this inequality. Early childhood educators in under-resourced settings are frequently underpaid, undertrained, and overburdened. Expecting them to implement nuanced, play-based pedagogies without systemic support is unrealistic. Meanwhile, elite institutions invest heavily in teacher training, infrastructure, and curriculum design. This further widens the gap. The result is a dual-track system of early education. One track cultivates agency, creativity, and confidence. The other prioritises discipline, repetition, and early performance. Over time, these differences do not just shape learning outcomes but also dispositions, self-worth, and the very sense of what it means to be a learner. This is why early childhood education must be reframed. Importantly, policy discourse has already acknowledged the centrality of early years. The National Education Policy 2020 integrates ages three to eight into the foundational stage and emphasises play-based, holistic, and developmentally appropriate learning; however, its implementation remains uneven.

If we accept that childhood lays the foundation for all future learning, then unequal childhoods produce unequal futures. The issue is not simply about access to schooling but about the quality and nature of experiences within those spaces. Who gets to ask questions without fear? Who is encouraged to imagine? Who is allowed to fail safely? And crucially, who is not? Addressing this demands a fundamental shift in how early education is valued and resourced.

Investments in teacher training, particularly in play-based and socio-emotional learning approaches, are critical. It also requires rethinking assessment practices that push academic benchmarks into inappropriate age groups.

Equally important is challenging the societal belief that earlier is better when it comes to formal learning. Public investment must prioritise early childhood as foundational, not supplementary. Accountability frameworks should shift from narrow academic outcomes to holistic indicators such as well-being, engagement, and social development.

When childhood itself becomes unequal, education ceases to be an equaliser. It becomes a mechanism of reproduction. In that moment, we must ask whether we are nurturing learners or merely sorting them. Childhood should not be a privilege. It should be a right.

(The writer is pursuing a PhD in Political Science and the co-author of Creativity and Critical Pedagogy in Education*)*

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: APRIL 1976

State to go ahead with projects in Cauvery basin

Bangalore, April 14
The State Government has taken a firm stand on the construction of projects in the Cauvery basin and all the provisions of the old agreement had become null and void, Social Welfare Minister N. Rachaiah told the Legislative Council today. Mr. Rachaiah, who was deputising for Chief Minister Devaraj Urs, said during question hour that the projects under construction in the basin would go on despite the recent inconclusive talks.

25 YEARS AGO: APRIL 2001

Congress keeps off all-party meeting

New Delhi, April 14
The Congress today decided to stay away from an all-party meeting the prime minister had called for to protest against the government's decision to refer certain charges the Janata Party leader, Dr Subramanian Swamy, had made against the party president, Ms Sonia Gandhi, and her family members to the CBI. Swamy had alleged a fortnight ago that Ms Gandhi and her Italian parents had direct and indirect links with the KGB.

OASIS | ADITI PANT

Realising that you are the light

As the world turns in uncertain times, it is becoming increasingly tempting to believe that light belongs only to some places. Those spaces seem brighter, kinder and more alive than others, and we come to see joy as geographic, as external, but that is far from the truth.

Light, real light, the one that illuminates from within, belongs to people and not to places or situations.

There is a story about the sun and a cave that once tried to understand each other. The sun, naturally, could not comprehend darkness. And the cave, enclosed deep in the crevices of the earth, could not imagine brightness. So they agreed to exchange places.

The cave rose up into the open sky and, for the first time, felt warmth without walls. And the sun, curious and unchanged, descended into the cave. It entered the hollow, narrow and shadowy darkness and said, "I don't see any difference."

And this is where the secret rests.

The sun did not bring light into the cave as something separate from itself; it was the light. It did not need the cave to change in order for brightness to exist. It did not negotiate with the darkness or try to understand it. It simply arrived, and in arriving, transformed everything.

We often wait for our surroundings to improve before we allow ourselves to brighten. Yet life seldom waits for better circumstances. It waits on your decision to move, to arrive, and to brighten.

It waits for you to realise that the light you look for around you is actually inside you. We must protect this inherent light, this internal positivity, this essential calm and believe that we can move through the murky world like a quiet clear dawn. We should realise that we can walk into difficult places, places thick with smoke, doubts and darkness and not wait for permission to shine. Like the sun in the cave, we need not experience darkness the way others expect us to. Without absorbing it, without echoing it, we can illuminate it by our still, quiet and determined light.

For the question might or might not be about the cave. But the answer is, and will always be, about the sun; about the light that did not get lost even when it entered the cave.

DELIMITATION DEBATE: 'They will gain 50% seats despite having lower population growth'

Southern states will gain, Centre counters concerns

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The central government has defended the criticism from South Indian states that they were set to lose seats in the upcoming delimitation exercise, saying that they would benefit proportionally.

The government contended that the population in South India had not increased as much as in North India since the 1971 Census, and yet the southern states would be given a 50% increase in seats.

"Proportionally, they are set to benefit," Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said. "They are getting more seats with respect to their population — as per the same ratio, more voters are competing for one representative in North India."

KIREN RIJIJU
Union Minister

"The southern states are fortunate that despite controlling the population growth, despite a lesser number of people in terms of proportionate, in terms of ratio, they still gain because the numbers have risen proportionately

Union Law Minister Arjun Meghwal is expected to introduce the three delimitation Bills in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, and the Prime Minister and the Home Minister are expected to intervene; Shah is expected to intervene on Friday.

Only one discussion will be held on the Bills, and 18-20 hours will be set aside for it in the Lok Sabha.

If the Bills are passed in the Lok Sabha, they will be introduced in the Rajya Sabha on Saturday, said sources.

The Bills are being brought to expedite the implementation of women's reservation, which was due to begin after the 2026 Census. They are expected to delink women's reservation from the ongoing Census and base it on the 2011 Census.

India's population was 60 crore in 1971, but increased to 121 crore as per the 2011 Census. As per the delimitation process, 50% seats will increase in the Lok Sabha and in state Assemblies. The number of seats in the Lok Sabha will increase to 815 or 816, said a senior official.

"The details will be decided by the Delimitation Commission, keeping in mind various factors, including the SC/ST population, and taking into account the rounding of fractions in the number of seats," the official added.

Currently, 84 Lok Sabha seats are earmarked for SCs and 47 for STs. As per the 2011 Census, SCs comprised 16.6% and STs 8.6% of the population. The projections are that they will increase to 136 and 70, respectively.

On whether there was any cap on how long these numbers would be sustained, the senior leader said: "There might be no need for delimitation in the future as the population numbers are dipping."

To illustrate the argument, he gave the example of Haryana and Kerala. "In 1971, Haryana's population was 1 crore, and in 2011, it was 2.5 crore. In Kerala, the population was 2.5 crore in 1971; today, it is 3.3 crore. Kerala is set to gain 10 more Lok Sabha seats, bringing its total to 30. But in Haryana, the number of Lok Sabha seats will increase to 15. Proportionally, Kerala has gained," the official said.

Revanth writes to PM

Stating that a pro rata and population-based model to increase Lok Sabha seats will not be acceptable to people and governments of southern India, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convene an all-party meeting to deliberate on the proposed delimitation, reports DHNS from Hyderabad.

In a letter to Modi on Tuesday, Reddy, ahead of the special Parliament session, said that any attempt to proceed without addressing concerns of South Indian states will inevitably lead to widespread opposition and resistance, as it touches upon the fundamental principle of fair representation.

CMs allege bias, warn Centre of protests

E T B SIVAPRIYAN & S N V SUDHIR
THANJAVUR/HYDERABAD, DHNS

Alleging that a Constitutional Amendment on delimitation was being pushed through Parliament during election season, Chief Minister M K Stalin on Tuesday warned the BJP-led Union government that Tamil Nadu "will not remain silent" and "will register its protest with full force" if the state is harmed during the exercise.

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy also opposed the move by calling for a protracted struggle against the Centre and demanded that the number of Lok Sabha seats be increased based on a "hybrid model" under which 50 % of the additional seats would be allocated on a pro rata basis and the remaining 50% on Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and other performance criteria. He warned that the BJP conspired to reduce the seats of the southern states under the pretext of increasing representation based on a 50% growth.

MK STALIN
Tamil Nadu chief minister

"We do not even know how this delimitation exercise is going to be carried out. No explanation has been provided so far regarding the proposed Constitutional amendment.

REVANTH REDDY
Telangana CM

"States with higher population growth in a northern-central belt will gain disproportionately which effectively translates into a scenario where progress is penalised and demographic expansion is rewarded.

In a video message, Stalin told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that every family will take to the streets, and he will organise a massive agitation against the delimitation, which he feared would disproportionately enhance the political power of the northern states.

"Do not assume that, since this is an election period and attention is elsewhere, you can quietly carry out delimitation in Delhi. Do not even entertain that thought. I speak not merely as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, but as the leader of a great movement, the DMK," Stalin told Modi.

"You will witness a Tamil Nadu that you have not seen before. India will once again witness the spirit of the DMK of the 1950s and 1960s. Do not mistake this for a threat. This is a warning," Stalin said, referring to the massive protests that the state witnessed against Hindi imposition.

"Elections and being in power are secondary to us. We are a people of self-respect. For us, principles matter. The rights of states matter... If you imagine that you can wrong Tamil Nadu and move on as usual, you are mistaken. Hon'ble Prime Minister, I repeat, this is the final warning issued to you from Tamil Nadu," he said.

Reddy alleged that the Centre's move would result in grave injustice to women, SC and ST communities in the Southern states.

Reddy, who wrote letters to CMs M K Stalin (Tamil Nadu), N Chandrababu Naidu (Andhra Pradesh), Siddaramaiah (Karnataka), Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala) and N Rangasamy (Puducherry UT), told them that the southern states, despite their substantial contribution to the national economy, will witness a relative erosion of their voice in Parliament if the pro rata model is implemented.

Delimitation Commission to head distribution of LS, Assembly seats

NEW DELHI, DHNS: A new Delimitation Bill will be brought in Parliament on Thursday under which the government is empowered to set up a Commission to decide on distributing the seats in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies based on the "latest census figures".

Once passed, the Delimitation Bill, 2026, will replace the existing law of 2002 and has been circulated among MPs along with the 'The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026' and 'The Union Territories Laws (Amendment Bill), 2026', as the government intends to operationalise the 33% women's quota by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill has proposed increasing the number of Lok Sabha seats from 550 to 850. The Delimitation Commission will decide the number of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats in each state.

The Delimitation Commission will be headed by a sitting or former Supreme Court judge, the Chief Election Commissioner or an Election Commissioner nominated by the Chief Election Commissioner, and the State Election Commissioner of the state concerned. The term of the Commission will be specified by the Union government and could be extended on the request of the Commission.

The Bill said that the Election Commission would act as the Delimitation Commission for the purpose of delimiting constituencies in the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, "falling under the occupation of Pakistan, when the area of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir under the occupation of Pakistan ceases to be so occupied".

According to the Bill, "it shall be the duty of the Commission to readjust, on the basis of the latest census figures, the allocation of seats" in Lok Sabha to the states and UT, the total number of seats in the Assembly of each state and the division of each state and UTs into territorial constituencies for elections to the Lower House and Assemblies.

The Commission shall associate with itself for the purpose of assisting it in its duties in respect of each state, ten persons, five of whom shall be Lok Sabha MPs representing that state and five shall be members of the Assembly. If the number of MPs in a state is five or less, then all MPs shall be associate members.

According to the State of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, the existing allocation of seats of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies is based on the population figures published as per the 1971 census and the division of territorial constituencies is based on the population figures published as per the 2001 census.

European Court grants anonymity to Nirav case

NEW DELHI, PTI: Fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi has been granted anonymity by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in France's Strasbourg, taking away his case from public scrutiny, officials said.

Nirav Modi

The court will treat his case as confidential, and proceedings in the matter will be conducted away from the public glare, they said.

"In cases where an applicant has been granted anonymity and the case file is confidential, the court cannot provide any information about that case," the ECHR Press office said.

In around a fortnight, the ECHR is likely to conduct a hearing on Nirav Modi's plea. The court will also hear the CBI, following which it might give a verdict, sources said.

If Modi's plea is rejected, it will eliminate the final legal hurdle for his extradition to India from the UK, where he is lodged in a London prison.

In March, the UK's High Court of Justice rejected Modi's petition to reopen his case against extradition, relying on the "quality of assurances" given by the Indian government, which it said were "comprehensive" enough to neutralise the risk of torture that might have barred his transfer to India.

Govt revises fee structure for overloading of trucks

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Road Transport Ministry has revised the fee structure for the overloading of trucks, under which vehicles found carrying excess load on national highways will be charged based on the percentage of overloading.

The amended rules will be effective from April 15, 2026.

According to the ministry, no overboard fee will be charged for up to 10% of excess load.

"Over 10% and up to 40% excess load, fee charged at 2 times the base rate," it said, adding that above 40%, the fee is charged at 4 times the base rate.

The ministry said overloading will be determined using certified weight measurement devices installed at the fee plaza.

"In cases where weighment facilities are not available at fee plazas, no overload fee shall be levied," it added.

The Ministry also said that overloading fees will be collected through FASTag only.

PM Modi bats for social justice, Constitution dignity

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that the NDA government is committed to delivering true social justice to every poor person, adding that the policies and decisions of the BJP-led central government over the past decade have restored the dignity of the Constitution.

Addressing a public meeting in Dehradun after inaugurating the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor, Prime Minister Modi said that the Constitution is now fully applicable across the entire nation following the abrogation of Article 370.

"Today is also the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar. The policies formulated and the decisions taken by our government over the past decade have served to restore the dignity of the Constitution," he said.

Modi said the Indian Constitution expects that a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) be implemented in the country, adding that by taking this spirit forward, Uttarakhand has shown the path to the nation.

Earlier in the day, the prime minister inaugurated the Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor, which will cut travel time between the two cities to nearly half.

The 213 km-long six-lane access-controlled corridor has been built at a cost of over Rs 12,000 crore.

The rise and rise of Samrat Choudhary

He served under three CMs before becoming BJP's first in Bihar

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary during a BJP legislatures meeting, in Patna on Tuesday. PTI

No party should complain, at least for now, about Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, who will take oath on Wednesday.

The reason: He started his career with the RJD, and shifted his allegiance from Lalu to Nitish before joining the JD(U). Later, he was with the Hindustan Awam Morcha (HAM), run by Union minister and former Bihar CM Jitan Ram Manjhi.

He was also the urban development minister in the short-lived Manjhi government in 2014-15 before joining the BJP in 2018, becoming the Bihar BJP chief in 2023, and deputy CM in 2024.

During his first stint as Nitish's deputy, Samrat was the finance minister. After winning a landslide in November 2025, he became Nitish's deputy again, but this time handled the Home portfolio, which had stayed with Nitish since 2005.

Nitish's trusted aide

As Nitish's health deteriorated, Samrat became his shadow — from helping him (at every public meeting) to handling an aggressive media.

His road to success, however, was not smooth. His controversies included being removed as a minister in the Rabri Devi government in 1999 for being underage.

Before the 2025 Bihar Assembly election, he was accused by Jan Suraaj founder Prashant Kishor of obtaining bail through fake documents in a murder case.

However, Samrat laughed at Kishor's allegations. "The man, who has never contested an election, is making allegations against me hoping against hope that if he levels charges against Bihar's Deputy CM, he would get national media attention. I give a damn to such allegations," said Samrat, who, before becoming BJP's first Chief Minister, has already served under three CMs: Rabri Devi, Jitan Ram Manjhi and Nitish Kumar.

Oppn flags federal concerns over bills

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi exchanges greetings with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge during the tribute paying ceremony to Dr BR Ambedkar in New Delhi. PTI

The plan to increase seats in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies may run into rough weather in Parliament with the Opposition amplifying its objections for delimitation and linking it to early implementation of 33% of women's quota.

A final call on the strategy in Parliament, which will reconvene on April 16, will be taken at a meeting of Opposition parties called by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday afternoon.

Parties like Congress, Trinamool Congress, DMK, CPM, CPI and AAP have opposed the delimitation proposal while those like Samajwadi Party have questioned the implementation of women's quota on the basis of Census 2011 and not the ongoing exercise.

As the Bill was circulated among MPs seeking to increase Lok Sabha seats' upper limit to 850, Congress Rajya Sabha Chief Whip Jairam Ramesh said, "When the intent behind a Bill is mischievous and the content of it is devious, the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous."

"These bills amount to a death warrant for federal India. It reflects a cunning strategy to reduce southern India to a political colony of the north. Even assuming the proposed Delimitation Commission ensures a pro-rata increase, it would still deliver a severe blow to federal balance. In politics, absolute numbers matter far more than mere ratio," CPM's John Brittas said.

The Opposition is projecting the government move as pushing delimitation under the guise of women's bill. It has also questioned the "sudden" move, saying the government had earlier rejected the Opposition demand for women's quota implementation in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The Bill, aimed at amending the Constitution, needs two-third majority and the government is short of votes to clear it and would need the Opposition support. However, the Bill does not propose quota-within-quota for OBC women, another sticking point.

While supporting the early implementation of 33% women's quota, most of the Opposition parties objected to the reported proposal of increase in seats by 50%. They argue that an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha "must be politically and not just arithmetically equitable".

Noida protests: Over 300 arrested, govt sees conspiracy behind violence

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS:

Security personnel conduct a march in Sector 80 amid ongoing workers' protest to maintain law and order, in Noida, on Tuesday. PTI

Stray incidents of violence were reported from Noida on Tuesday, a day after thousands of workers of different private companies went on the rampage demanding increase in wages, overtime payment and other benefits, setting ablaze vehicles, damaging properties and indulging in heavy stone pelting.

According to police, more than 300 people were taken into custody in connection with violence and efforts were on to identify the trouble mongers and apprehend them.

Additional companies of RAF and PAC were rushed to Noida as security personnel staged flag marches in the affected areas.

Gautam Buddh Nagar police commissioner Laxmi Singh said, "Some groups have also been identified which incited violence," she said, adding that more arrests could be made in the days to come.

The police commissioner said an outside group tried to incite violence and added that some anti-social elements had also infiltrated the workers.

Sources said that the government suspected a well-planned conspiracy behind the violence and that the probe into the same would also investigate if there was an organised disinformation and efforts to reignite the naxalite movement.

UP industrial development minister Nand Gopal Gupta accused the Samajwadi Party and Congress of 'conspiring' to disturb the law and order.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav hit back saying the state government was trying to hide its failure by deflecting the blame on the Opposition.

Interim wage hike

According to sources, a high-level meeting was held late on Monday night in which it was decided to increase the minimum wage up to Rs 3,000. The new wage would be applicable retrospectively from April 1.

Sources said there would be different slabs for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The wages would be different for cities like Gautam Buddh Nagar, Ghaziabad, cities having municipal corporations and other districts.

GUJ RESORT POLITICS

Cong 'hides' candidates to avoid BJP influence

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

A game of hide-and-seek seems to be afoot in Gujarat ahead of the local body elections. While the Congress is busy hiding its candidates to avoid BJP's alleged attempt to influence them into withdrawing nominations, the saffron brigade has taken the opportunity to criticise the opponent for doubting its leaders.

So far, BJP's candidates are said to have won over 300 seats "uncontested" out of 9,992 seats across 393 local bodies.

The last day of filing nominations was Saturday and the deadline for withdrawal of nomination is Wednesday. Fearing more withdrawals, the Congress has sent its candidates, majority of whom are contesting for the first time, to resorts in unknown locations.

Gujarat is set to go to polls for 15 civic bodies, 84 municipalities, 34 district panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats. Voting will be held on April 26 and results will be announced on April 28. This is a crucial election as it will set the tone for next year's Assembly polls.

The Congress's move comes after the party received information that its candidates were contacted by individuals who claimed they were from the ruling party.

'Gross illegality'

The Congress accused election officials of colluding with BJP and alleged that the special operation group and the local crime branch officials were intimidating its candidates.

"Complaints have been filed in Vasada, Kalol and Surat against such officials by name. But no action is being taken. There are attempts to buy our candidates for Rs 25-30 lakh," said state congress president Amit Chavda.

He also alleged "gross illegality" in the election process. He alleged that the election officials were rejecting forms of Congress candidates illegally.

SIT formed as Nashik Police widen TCS sexual harassment probe

MUMBAI, DHNS: Amid suspicions that organised groups may have played a larger role in the sexual harassment and religious conversion case involving employees of IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), the Nashik Police are investigating the travel history, call records, and bank accounts of eight accused and one absconding suspect.

The incidents were reported from 2022 to 2026. Nine FIRs have been registered.

The police have formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe cases registered at the Deolali Camp and Mumbai Naka Police Stations, clubbing them into a single probe.

They have also appealed to victims to come forward and lodge complaints.

Those arrested so far include Danish Sheikh, Tousif Attar, Raza Memon, Shahrukh Qureshi, Asif Ansari, Shafi Sheikh and Ashwini Chainani.

Meanwhile, Nida Khan, who has emerged as a key figure in the group accused of sexual harassment and religious conversion, remains absconding.

According to the charges, Khan, a member of the HR team responsible for addressing employee grievances and ensuring compliance with Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) regulations, allegedly ignored complaints from victims.

Supreme Court sets certificate requirement for EWS quota in jobs

Says no relief to appellants not possessing certificate in prescribed form by cut-off date

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has said that a candidate must possess, on or before the cut-off date, the income and asset certificate for the financial year specified in the prescribed form to claim reservation under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category for a post.

A bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Prasanna B Varale also underscored that when a certificate was sought for a particular financial year, a certificate from a different financial year went to the root of a candidate's eligibility.

The court dismissed appeals filed by Poonam Dwivedi and others against the Allahabad High Court's division bench judgment of January 9, 2023.

The division bench set aside the single judge's judgment directing the UP Subordinate Service Selection Commission to consider the candidature of the petitioners to the post of Health Workers (Female).

The HC noted that the petitioners had qualified through written examinations, and that their candidatures were rejected only because of the discrepancy in their EWS certificates.

In its judgment, the apex court bench said: "In matters of public recruitment, where a large number of candidates participate, application forms are submitted online along with the scanned eligibility documents, certificates, etc."

It added: "Such applications are processed through computer applications/software, and therefore, any error in the application is bound to result in the candidature's rejection. Challenge to such a rejection must not ordinarily be entertained as it could stall expeditious completion of the recruitment process, thereby frustrating thousands and lakhs of aspirants."

In the case, the court noted, the appellants admittedly did not possess the necessary certificate in the prescribed form by the cut-off date, so no relief could be accorded to them.

"If the certificate(s) relied upon by the appellants were not in respect of the financial year prior to the year of the application and were issued prior to even closure of the relevant financial year, there was an error apparent on the face of those certificates and, therefore, in our view, the respondents were justified in rejecting the claim of the appellants based on those certificates," the bench said in its judgment on Friday.

Manipur: Clashes erupt as locals mistake security forces for Kukis

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Several civilians were injured in clashes with security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday after locals tried to stop the movement of the forces, mistaking them for Kuki insurgents. Four persons were later arrested.

As the tension flared up, the administration clamped curfew from 5pm till further orders in the district, which has remained on the boil since April 7, when two Meitei children were killed in a bomb attack allegedly by the Kukis.

In a statement, Manipur police said the tension started around 1.30 pm when a team of central forces were obstructed while they were moving towards Thinungei in Kwakta area based on inputs about the presence of illegal arms. Kwakta is situated on the fringes of Bishnupur and Kuki-dominated Churachandpur district.

The police said the information about the presence of weapons was revealed by a drug peddler who was arrested with contraband at Imphal airport on Tuesday morning.

However, the mob mistook the security forces for Kuki insurgents and tried to stop them. "The situation escalated when some members of the crowd turned violent, damaging and setting fire to two vehicles belonging to the security personnel. There were also attempts to detain personnel. The crowd was dispersed using minimum necessary force" the police said.

'Audacity': SC rejects wife's claim for Rs 170-cr gold, jewellery

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has said once the parties enter into a settlement agreement duly authenticated by the mediator, any party that withdraws from it should have to pay significant financial penalties.

A bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Vijay Bishnoi said any deviation from the terms of the settlement arrived at in mediation and later confirmed by the court should be dealt with strictly, as such deviation undermined the entire mediation process' foundational basis.

The court, in its April 13 judgment, strongly disapproved of a wife's claim that her husband promised her jewellery worth Rs 120 crore and gold biscuits worth Rs 50 crore as an out-of-court settlement agreement for divorce to evade his wealth-tax liability, terming it "highly egregious" and an audacious submission before a court of law.

The bench said that while a spouse might withdraw consent for divorce by mutual agreement, such withdrawal was impermissible once both parties had settled all disputes and agreed to dissolve the marriage.

Allowing the husband's plea against a Delhi High Court judgment in a case related to domestic violence, the court, dissolved the marriage by invoking Article 142 of the Constitution after noting that it had irretrievably broken down.

The parties got married in 2000. The husband filed for divorce in 2023 due to temperamental issues.

The husband agreed to withdraw the first divorce petition and pay the wife Rs 1.5 crore in two instalments, purchase a car for Rs 14 lakh, and hand over certain jewellery items.

The wife agreed to execute a gift deed to transfer Rs 2.5 crore from their joint business account to the husband. But, before the second motion, the wife withdrew consent for mutual divorce.

2 MBA students die of suspected overdose at Mumbai concert

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Two MBA students from a prominent South Mumbai college died of a suspected drug overdose during a live music concert in Goregaon over the weekend, prompting a police crackdown.

The victims, a 24-year-old woman and man, were part of a group of around two dozen students attending the event at the NESCO Exhibition Centre, located off the Western Express Highway.

Another female student in her early twenties was hospitalised and is now out of danger, police said.

The incident occurred on the night of April 11–12, when three members of the group allegedly consumed drugs, and their health rapidly deteriorated. They were rushed to nearby hospitals, where two were declared dead.

Vanrai police have registered a case and launched an investigation. So far, six people have been arrested, including two friends of the victims, the event organiser and a NESCO staff member. Investigators suspect drug distribution, underage alcohol access and multiple safety violations at the venue.

"Two persons have died due to a suspected drug overdose. One was hospitalised and is now out of danger. Six persons have been arrested so far, and investigations are in progress," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 12) Mahesh Chimte said on Wednesday.

Police said two classmates of the victims allegedly supplied the narcotics. Autopsy and forensic reports are awaited to confirm the exact cause of death.

MISCELLANY

◆COMICS◆

Blondie

I JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW MUCH COLD WEATHER I BRAVED TO DELIVER THIS SILLY MAGAZINE TO YOU
BUT IT ONLY TAKES A FEW MINUTES TO WALK UP HERE AND DELIVER IT!
YEAH, BUT I SHIVERED IN THE COLD FOR A HALF HOUR READING IT BEFORE I DID!

Hagar The Horrible

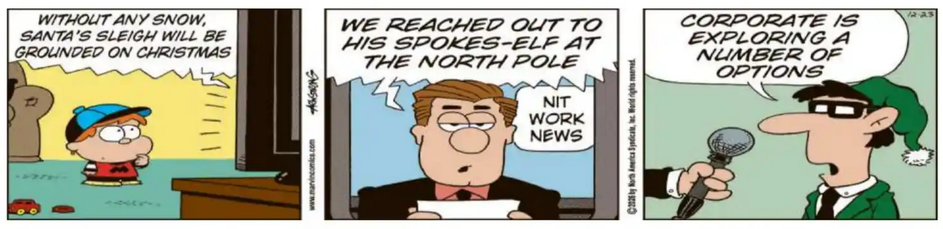
Beetle Bailey

I'M MAKING A CHRISTMAS DINNER FOR GUYS WHO HAVE NOWHERE TO GO
HMM...BEETLE INVITED ME TO JOIN HIM WITH HIS FAMILY
TURKEY, STUFFING, PUMPKIN, APPLE AND PECAN PIES...
AND NO BEETLE!
12/22

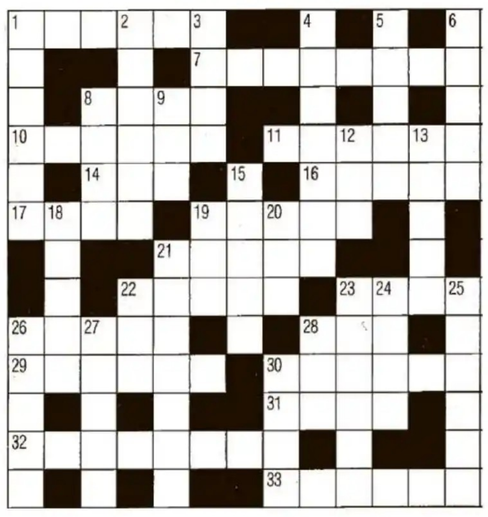
Peanuts

SORRY I'M LATE, MA'AM.. THE BATTERY IN MY HEAD WENT DEAD
MY FRIEND HERE PUSHED ME DOWNHILL TO GET MY HEAD STARTED, AND I BANGED INTO A TREE!
I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD HAVE USED JUMPER CABLES, SIR
SHE'S WEIRD, MA'AM!

Marvin


WITHOUT ANY SNOW, SANTA'S SLEIGH WILL BE GROUNDED ON CHRISTMAS
WE REACHED OUT TO HIS SPOKES-ELF AT THE NORTH POLE
NIT WORK NEWS
CORPORATE IS EXPLORING A NUMBER OF OPTIONS

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12395



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 A name no chap would change (6)
7 Understood to have made the grade (8)
8 Where to shop for a thousand of everything? (4)
10 Could you hope to include ducks with this bird? (6)
11 Historic seagoing member with a feminine name (6)
14 A cricket side (3)
16 Flat area wherein the plane crashed? (5)
17 In a model landscape, a low part (4)
19 She has to take £50 to the office before early closing (5)
21 Wait for a New Deal on the 4th of July (5)
22 Sloppy sort of sauce containing some eggs (5)
23 Parts you may have thrilled to? (4)
26 Possibly repair a damaged sewer? (5)
28 By getting the key right on the piano (3)
29 Are out of a tin, but that's the secret (6)
30 Being untidily coiled will do no harm (6)
31 Biblical name for a samosa ingredient (4)
32 China was broken by this, used as a weapon (5,3)
33 Relatively young ladies (6)

DOWN
1 Hurried to turn up and cast off (6)
2 Good place going cheap for a pound (6)
3 Look round at an unusual leg (4)
4 Play in a clever way, i.e. quickly (7)
5 A red nose, perhaps, can never quite be orange (5)
6 Perfect as the ale I'd brewed (5)
8 Gangster's girl wanting some more money (4)
9 A timber sleeper? (3)
12 She's a blossom (3)
13 Pottery possibly left to a daughter (5)
15 Victor joins Olga on the river (5)
18 Mountain that looks grand in Eire, possibly (5)
19 Unripe grapes are too much for her (3)
20 Put down as unprofessional (3)
21 Drinking in the street (7)
22 It has its vacationist side (3)
23 Suit to change into (6)
24 A girl I'd take some risks for (4)
25 Vegetables with a way of going to seed, somehow (6)
26 Where there's no job for a dude (5)
27 The neck gets cold wrapped in tattered rags (5)
28 Mop up for the dog! (3)
30 Wonderful wand bringing light (4)

ACROSS
1 Large prawns (6)
7 Hallway or passage (8)
8 Grain store (4)
10 Heavy and inert (6)
11 Turkish capital (6)
14 Obtain (3)
16 Lubricated (5)
17 Anon (4)
19 Player's first game (5)
21 Pigmeat (5)
22 Arm joint (5)
23 Harsh grating noise (4)
26 Love deeply (5)
28 Container (3)
29 Serious, glum (6)
30 Choose (6)
31 Foot part (4)
32 Visualise (8)
33 Cleaning cloth (6)

DOWN
1 Walking poles (6)
2 First ever (6)
3 Religious image (4)
4 Part of speech (7)
5 Perfect (5)
6 Staff of life (5)
8 Pudding ingredient (4)
9 Permit (3)
12 Equipment (3)
13 Harvests (5)
15 Lure (5)
18 Surpass (5)
19 Flatfish (3)
20 Bend (3)
21 Stain (7)
22 Before (3)
23 Measuring sticks (6)
24 Biblical murder victim (4)
25 Golf club (6)
26 Fire remains (5)
27 Oily fruit (5)
28 Golf peg (3)
30 Cast off (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12394

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Bur-st 6, Jimmy 9, Weed out 10, Aspic 11, Scar-E 12, Bo-O-th 13, Catches 15, Pub(lic.) 17, Utah 18, Scrape 19, Alice 20, In time 22, Mesa 24, Da-y 25, T-reason 26, Arias 27, Vic-ki 28, Par-Ry. 29, Iceberg 30, Senna 31, Ye-LL-s.
DOWN: 2, Unseat 3, Switch 4, Tec 5, Adi-O-s 6, Just-ice 7, It-Ch. 8, Mark-up 12, Belle 13, Cup-I'd 14, TA-sty 15, Paces 16, B-E-gan 18, Scars 19, America 21, (alter)Native 22, Manage 23, So-rr-el 25, T-abby 26, Akin 28, Pry.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Cheap 6, Sails 9, Titanic 10, Abate 11, Mirth 12, Tepid 13, Worries 15, Sap 17, Oboe 18, Cajole 19, Prior 20, Artery 22, Mist 24, Nee 25, Deduces 26, Ether 27, Coupe 28, Rafts 29, Exhibit 30, Beret 31, Melts.
DOWN: 2, Hobnob 3, Attire 4, Pie 5, Hates 6, Similar 7, Acid 8, Lethal 12, Terry 13, Woman 14, Route 15, Sonic 16, Pests 18, Cover 19, Pretext 21, Remote 22, Mutual 23, Septet 25, Devil 26, Epee 28, Rim.

◆SU-DO-KU-6880◆

	8	6	1					5
	3		6	4			1	
2	5					4		
			9					7
1		8	3		2	5		6
9					8			
		2					5	3
	9			5	7		8	
5					6	9	4	

easy

1	6	3	9	5	2	8	4	7
4	9	7	3	1	8	6	5	2
8	2	5	6	4	7	3	9	1
6	7	4	8	3	5	2	1	9
9	3	1	2	6	4	7	8	5
5	8	2	1	7	9	4	6	3
3	5	6	7	8	1	9	2	4
7	1	9	4	2	6	5	3	8
2	4	8	5	9	3	1	7	6

SOLUTION TO 6879

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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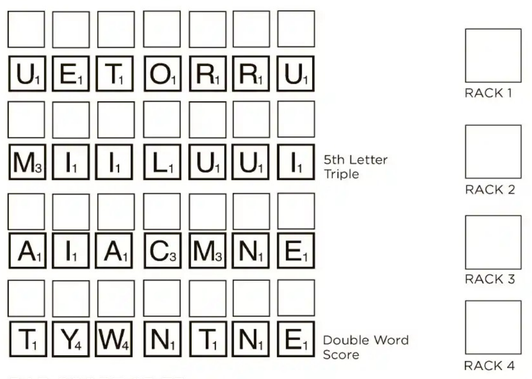
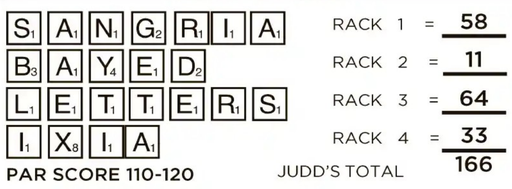

U1 E1 T1 O1 R1 R1 U1
M3 I1 I1 L1 U1 U1 I1
5th Letter Triple
A1 I1 A1 C3 M3 N1 E1
T1 Y4 W4 N1 T1 N1 E1
Double Word Score
RACK 1
RACK 2
RACK 3
RACK 4

PAR SCORE 65-75
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



RACK 1 = 58
RACK 2 = 11
RACK 3 = 64
RACK 4 = 33
JUDD'S TOTAL 166

PAR SCORE 110-120

JUMBLE®

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VEOLC

DUTIA

VORENP

GLAELE

You look amazing in those! Should I ring them up?
It will be hard not to take notice of me in these.
Did you notice the cost? It's up there.
10 3
THE DESIGNER HIGH HEELS THAT MADE HER FOUR INCHES TALLER CAME WITH AN ---

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SOUPY KNOCK ABSORB FUTILE
Answer: When it came to giving the young singer advice, Sinatra — SPOKE FRANKLY

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HITORI-3334

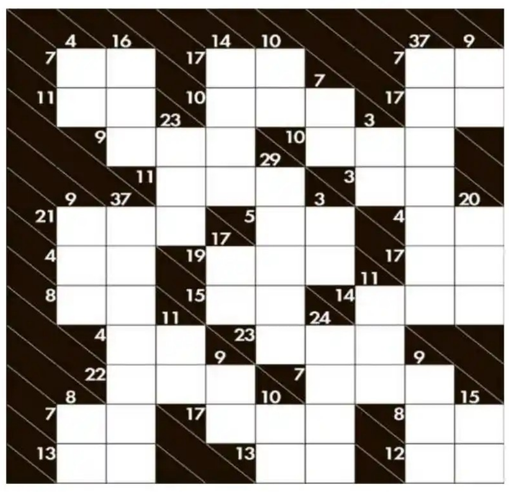
2	8	4	8	7	3	6	4
5	6	1	7	4	7	2	3
7	4	7	1	2	7	7	2
3	7	5	6	1	4	7	8
7	5	7	2	3	6	1	8
8	7	6	4	8	2	3	1
8	4	2	7	6	1	7	4
6	8	7	7	2	5	4	4

SOLUTION TO 3333

■	4	■	6	2	5	■	8
6	5	2	7	8	■	1	4
■	8	4	■	6	7	■	3
5	3	■	2	1	4	7	6
3	6	7	■	4	■	5	■
4	■	1	5	■	8	2	7
2	1	■	4	7	3	8	■
8	■	3	1	5	■	6	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

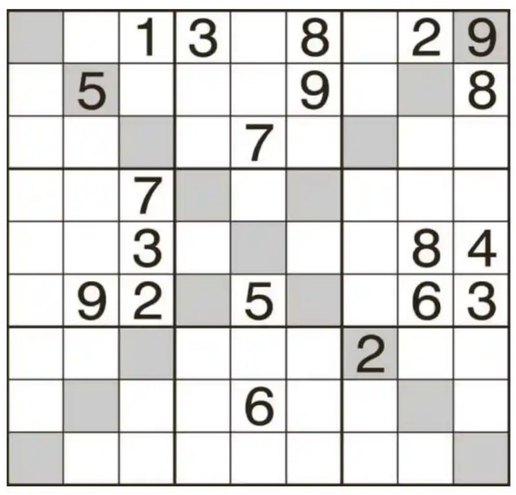
KAKURO- 3334



SOLUTION TO 3333

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3886



SOLUTION TO 3885

2	1	8	5	3	6	9	4	7
3	7	6	9	1	4	8	2	5
4	9	5	8	7	2	6	1	3
7	6	9	3	2	5	4	8	1
8	2	1	6	4	7	3	5	9
5	3	4	1	8	9	2	7	6
6	4	3	7	5	8	1	9	2
1	8	7	2	9	3	5	6	4
9	5	2	4	6	1	7	3	8

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

West Asia conflict may push 2.5 million Indians into poverty: UN

UNITED NATIONS, PTI: The conflict and military escalation in West Asia threaten to push 2.5 million people in India into poverty, and the country is projected to experience some loss in its human development progress, according to estimates by the United Nations.

The UN Development Programme, in a report titled 'Military Escalation in West Asia: Human Development Impacts Across Asia and the Pacific', noted that the conflict is "widening human development pressures across Asia and the Pacific through higher fuel, freight and input costs".

The assessment estimates that globally 8.8 million are at risk of falling into poverty, and West Asia escalation could cost the Asia-Pacific region up to $299 billion. In India, poverty is expected to rise from around 400,000 to 2.5 million. It added that the number of people pushed into poverty globally as a result of the conflict has risen from 1.9 million to nearly 8.8 million.

Trump eyes second Iran talks in 'two days' as Xi cautions US over conflict

Pakistan may host negotiations again

WASHINGTON, PTI

President Donald Trump has said that a second round of talks with Iran could be held in Islamabad "over the next two days", according to a US media report on Tuesday.

"You should stay there, really, because something could be happening over the next two days, and we're more inclined to go there," Trump told The New York Post. Trump attributed the possibility of a second round of talks to the "great job" done by Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir.

"It's more likely, you know why? Because the field marshal is doing a great job," the US President said. Fox News reported that the US decision to impose a blockade on Iranian ports was one of the reasons for Tehran returning to the negotiating table. "A lot is happening today and tomorrow. We have all the ingredients of a deal, but it's not all there yet," one US official told Fox News.

US Central Command said it successfully blocked all vessels travelling to and from Iranian ports and coastal areas in the first 24 hours of President Trump's blockade.

The US and Iran failed to reach an agreement in the 21-hour marathon peace talks in Islamabad over the weekend, with Washington insisting that Tehran refused to give up its right to nuclear enrichment.

China's President Xi Jinping on Tuesday warned against a return "to the law of the jungle", in a thinly veiled criticism of the US, in his most direct public comments on the US-Israel war with Iran. "Maintaining the authority of international rule of law means not using it when it suits us and abandoning it when it doesn't," Xi said.

(L-R) US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa, Lebanon Ambassador to the US Nada Hamadeh Moawad and Israel Ambassador to the US Yechiel Leiter pose for a photo before their official meeting in Washington DC on Tuesday. REUTERS

Lebanon, Israel hold first direct talks in decades

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI: Lebanon and Israel were holding their first direct talks in decades as fighting between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group rocks southern Lebanon.

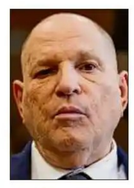
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors for Tuesday's discussions in Washington. Hezbollah has said it will not abide by any agreement, a high-ranking member of the group's political council told AP. Rubio called the talks a "historic opportunity" and made it clear no breakthrough deal was immediately expected.

He said the Trump administration is "very happy" to be facilitating the discussions. Hezbollah opposes the direct talks and was not represented, and the group appeared to step up its fire on northern Israel as the talks began.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Dalma Maradona, daughter of Argentine soccer legend Diego Armando Maradona, sits inside a court to attend a new trial against medical professionals facing negligence charges in connection to the 2020 death of the global icon, in Buenos Aires, on Tuesday. REUTERS

Harvey Weinstein faces retrial in New York rape case



Harvey Weinstein

▸ After years of #MeToo infamy, legal battles and imprisonment, Harvey Weinstein is once again going on trial on a rape charge in New York City, AP/PTI reports from New York.

Jury selection is set to begin as early as Tuesday in the former movie mogul's latest retrial, where jurors will weigh — for the third time — whether he raped hairstylist and actor Jessica Mann in a Manhattan hotel in 2013. However, "it's not going to be a mirror image of the last trial," Weinstein's new lawyer Marc Agnifilo told Judge Curtis Farber last month. This time, jurors will consider only one charge based on a single accuser, rather than the array of allegations aired at Weinstein's previous trials in New York and Los Angeles. The Oscar-winning producer denies all accusations and declared in court this winter that he had "acted wrongly, but I never assaulted anyone".The judge has indicated he may revisit some rulings on what evidence will be presented regarding Weinstein's and Mann's years of interaction.

Picasso painting up for raffle

▸ One lucky winner will become the owner of a Pablo Picasso painting for less than $120, AP/PTI reports from Paris.

A raffle in France is offering the chance to win a $1 million portrait by the Spanish artist for the price of a 100-euro ticket ($117), with proceeds going to Alzheimer's research. The draw is scheduled to take place later on Tuesday at Christie's in Paris. The third iteration of the "1 Picasso for 100 euros" lottery features Picasso's Head of a Woman, with proceeds again going to Alzheimer's research. The gouache on paper was painted by Picasso in 1941. The first such raffle in 2013 saw a Pennsylvania man win Man in the Opera Hat, which the Spanish master painted in 1914.

China's property tycoon pleads guilty to fraud

BEIJING, AFP: Xu Jiayin, the founder of Chinese property giant Evergrande, has pleaded guilty to charges of fraud and bribery, a court said on Tuesday, marking the latest blow for what was once the country's leading developer.

Evergrande's rise was propelled by decades of rapid urbanisation and rising living standards. However, in 2020 its access to credit narrowed sharply when the government introduced curbs on excessive borrowing and speculation.

China says India ties policy unchanged amid naming row

BEIJING, PTI

China on Tuesday said its policy to improve relations with India remains unchanged, as it defended its move to publish new names for various regions in Arunachal Pradesh.

India on Sunday categorically rejected China's efforts to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory, asserting that such attempts to create "baseless narratives" cannot alter the "undeniable reality" and could derail efforts to normalise bilateral ties. New Delhi's sharp reaction came against the backdrop of Beijing establishing a third new administrative county in Aksai Chin, a region India maintains as its territory.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said "Zangnan region is China's territory. China does not recognise the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' illegally set up by India."

Zangnan is the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet. "It is fully within China's sovereign rights for the Chinese government to issue standard names for some of the places in Zangnan," he said.

"China–India relations are generally stable at the moment. China's commitment to improving and growing China–India relations has not changed," Guo said.

Gunman opens fire at Turkish school, injures 16 before killing himself

ANKARA, AP/PTI: A former student opened fire at a high school in southeastern Turkiye on Tuesday, wounding at least 16 people before killing himself, an official said.

The 18-year-old attacker, armed with a shotgun, opened fire inside a vocational high school in Siverek, in anlıurfa province.

He later killed himself with the same weapon after being "cornered by police", Governor Hasan ıldak said.

The attack left 10 students, four teachers, a canteen employee and a police officer injured, ıldak said.

While most were being treated in Siverek, five of the injured — teachers and students — were transferred to a hospital in the provincial capital due to the severity of their conditions, the official added.

The motive for the attack remains unclear. School shootings are rare in Turkiye.

The attacker did not have a criminal record, ıldak said. The school had been declared safe, and no permanent police officer had been assigned to protect it, he added, describing the shooting as an "isolated incident".

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

TCS Nashik incident isolated, says Nasscom

BENGALURU, DHNS: The country's top IT industry body Nasscom on Tuesday said any instance of misconduct or harassment is treated with the highest degree of seriousness, with organisations taking swift, decisive, and appropriate disciplinary action in line with established processes. The company issued a statement with regards to the alleged sexual harassment incident at Tata Consultancy Services' Nashik facility.

The IT industry body said any such incident is isolated in nature and does not reflect systemic patterns within the industry. The Indian technology industry is built on a foundation of respect, dignity, and safety. The industry operates under strict governance frameworks and unequivocal standards for employee safety, and workplace conduct, it said.

"Employee safety and well-being remain non-negotiable priorities, and the industry maintains zero tolerance for any form of inappropriate behaviour. Companies across the sector have stricter preventive and redressal mechanisms, backed by clearly defined codes of conduct and full compliance with statutory legal frameworks to ensure that concerns are addressed promptly, fairly, and with due sensitivity. Upholding safe, respectful, and accountable workplaces is fundamental to sustaining a trusted work environment at all levels," it added in the statement.

Recently, 8 employees of TCS lodged complaints and claimed senior colleagues mentally and sexually harassed them, and the HR department turned a deaf ear to their complaints.

IMF raises India FY27 GDP growth projection to 6.5%

Global growth projected to slow to 3.1% this year

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday upgraded India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to 6.5%, which is 10 basis points higher than its earlier projection announced in January.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF noted that the reduction in additional US tariffs on Indian goods from 50% to 10% following the US Supreme Court's order would outweigh the adverse impact of the ongoing West Asia conflict.

"For 2026, growth is revised upward moderately by 0.3 percentage point (0.1 percentage point relative to January) to 6.5%, led by positive contributions from the carryover of the strong 2025 outturn and the decline in additional US tariffs on Indian goods from 50 to 10%, which outweigh the adverse impact of the Middle East conflict. Growth is projected to stay at 6.5% in 2027," IMF noted.

However, the projected growth for the current fiscal is substantially lower than the previous year's estimate of 7.6%.

Despite the upgrade, the IMF's India growth projection for the current financial year is lower than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 6.9% and the World Bank's 6.6%.

At the global level, the IMF warns that the West Asia conflict would pull down growth and lead to inflationary pressure.

"Assuming that the conflict remains limited in duration and scope, global growth is projected to slow to 3.1% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027," the IMF said.

Global headline inflation is projected to rise modestly in 2026 before resuming its decline in 2027. Slowdown in growth and increase in inflation are expected to be particularly pronounced in emerging markets and developing economies, it added.

DK Srivastava, Chief Policy Advisor, EY India, said the IMF report makes reference to three scenarios for global growth.

In its baseline scenario, it assumes a short-lived West Asia conflict in which the projected global growth for 2026 is 3.1%. In contrast, in the adverse scenario, global growth falls to 2.5% and in its severely adverse scenario, global growth may fall to 2%. Correspondingly, global inflation has been projected at 4.4%, 5.4% and 6% respectively.

For India, the IMF with respect to the baseline scenario projects a growth of 6.5% for 2026-27 and CPI inflation of 4.7%. In a scenario where the West Asian crisis may last well beyond the expectation of a short-lived conflict, India's growth may be around 6.5% and inflation somewhat higher.

If the price of Indian crude basket averages around $120 per barrel during the year, in the context of a relatively longer conflict, our estimates indicate that India's GDP growth may reach a level of 6.1% to 6.2%. Even so, it will be more than double that of global growth under the adverse scenario, Srivastava said.

IMF
RBI estimates growth at 6.9%
World Bank pegs growth at 6.6%
IMF projects CPI inflation at 4.7%
If Indian basket of crude averages $120 per barrel, growth may drop to 6.1% to 6.2%
West Asia conflict would pull down growth and lead to inflationary pressure, warns IMF

People gather in the atrium of the IMF building during the first day of the 2026 Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank Group in Washington, DC. AFP

Fuel price freeze: Rs 18/litre loss on petrol, Rs 35 on diesel

OMCs are incurring Rs 1,600 crore losses per day

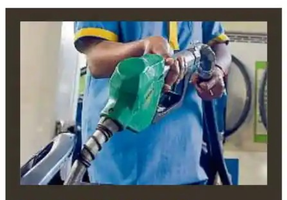
NEW DELHI, PTI

Losses on petrol have widened to Rs 18 per litre and to Rs 35 on diesel as state-owned fuel retailers continue to keep pump prices frozen despite a sharp rise in input costs, sources said.

Despite prices being deregulated more than a decade back, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not changed the retail petrol and diesel price since April 2022. Global crude oil prices have seen sharp fluctuations over this period - from above $100 per barrel following the Russia-Ukraine war, to easing to around $70 a barrel earlier this year, before surging again to about $120 last month after the US-Israel attacks on Iran triggered fresh supply concerns.

The three firms were incurring losses of about Rs 2,400 crore per day at the peak last month, which have since narrowed to around Rs 1,600 crore daily after the government cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each - a reduction that was not passed on to consumers but used to partly offset losses, industry sources said.

The losses in March have wiped away all gains they made in January/February, they said, adding the three firms are most likely to post losses in the January-March quarter.



Key Outlook

- Higher crude prices also pose a risk to India's external balances
- Current account deficit is expected to widen to around $20 billion in Q1, 2026
- $10 per barrel rise in crude could expand the deficit by roughly 30 basis points of GDP
- With every $1 per barrel change in crude prices impacting EBITDA by about 5% the sector's break-even crude price is estimated at $80-85 per barrel

Macquarie Group, in a report on 'India Fuel Retail', said, "At spot petrol-diesel pricing of $135-165 per barrel, we estimate India's oil marketing companies lose Rs 18 and Rs 35 per litre on petrol and diesel sales (respectively)."

Every $10 per barrel increase in crude adds roughly Rs 6 per litre to marketing losses, the report said.

The brokerage flagged a high likelihood of retail fuel price hikes after elections in key states like West Bengal and Tamil Nadu at the end of this month. "We see risk of higher pump prices post state elections in April."

While the government cut excise duty on fuels by Rs 10 per litre in March, central levies have been on a declining trend and now stand at Rs 11.9 per litre on petrol and Rs 7.8 per litre on diesel. Even a complete removal of excise duties would not fully offset OMC losses at current prices.

Car wholesale jumps to record 13.16 lakh units in Q4

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Passenger vehicle sales jumped by 13.2% year-on-year to 13.16 Lakh units in January-March quarter, the highest ever number recorded in Q4, supported by improved affordability following the GST rate reduction and lower interest rates, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said on Tuesday.

The segment also clocked its highest ever sales of 46.43 lakh units in the fiscal year 2025-26, posting a growth of 7.9% over the previous year.

Addressing a media briefing, SIAM President Shailesh Chandra said strong sales were recorded in the fiscal across the segments including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers.

In the financial year ended March 31, 2026, commercial vehicles posted sales of 10.80 lakh units, which is 12.6% higher over the previous year. Three wheelers posted sales of 8.36 lakh units with a growth of 12.8%, and two-wheelers posted sales of 2.17 crore units, with a growth of 10.7% year-on-year.

"Though FY 2025-26 started modestly, the Indian auto industry has closed the year on a high note with every vehicle category viz. passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers, together posting their highest ever sales in a financial year, after seven years," said Chandra.

"The strong contributors to this growth have been the positive sentiments created through GST 2.0 reforms and multiple repo rate cuts during the year," he added.

In the first half of 2025-26 passenger vehicle sales were down by 1.4% when compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. However, in the second half it posted a robust growth of 16.7% year-on-year. Reduction in goods and services tax (GST) rate, which was implemented in September, boosted automobile sales in the second half of FY26.

Passenger vehicles also saw their highest ever exports of 9.05 lakh units in 2025-26 registering a growth of 17.5% over 2024-25.

Moderate pay hikes likely in FY27

MUMBAI, PTI: Amid concerns over attrition, India Inc expects hiring to remain focused on mid-level roles, with salary hikes likely to stay moderate at around 5-10% in 2026-27, a report said on Tuesday.

Hiring demand is expected to be concentrated at the mid-level, with 49% of respondents identifying mid-level professionals as the primary focus area, according to a report by workforce staffing services and HR solutions Genius HRTech.

From the mud grounds of Gadag, emerges another hockey talent

Adarsh Mutagar is the lone player from Karnataka in Sub-junior men's national camp

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Hockey India released a 40-member list for the Sub-junior men's national camp on Monday. At No. 34 was Adarsh Govind Mutagar, the lone player from Karnataka to make it to the Indian preparatory camp from which the final squad will be picked for the Under-18 Asia Cup scheduled to be held in Kakamigahara in Japan from May 29 to June 6.

While the solitary presence of the 15-year-old fom the state was a sad reflection of the state's dwindling fortunes in the sport, Adarsh is experiencing butterflies in his stomach following his selection to the camp beginning on April 19 in Bhopal.

"Well.. I am a bit scared," the teen hesitantly admits when asked if he is nervous about making it to his first-ever national camp.

"I don't know anybody there. So my brother is accompanying me to drop me off. But I will go there and make friends," he tells *DH*.

The talent is obvious but the support from his family at every step is perhaps the reason behind the Gadag boy from a humble background making it this far.

Coming from a family who live and breathe hockey, it was but natural for Adarsh to pick up a stick as a six-year-old.

While his uncle Anil Mutagar, a former Karnataka player and now a coach, groomed Adarsh initially, his cousin Harish Mutagar -- junior India international, Karnataka captain and who was also a part of the Soorma Hockey Club at the Hockey India League (HIL) -- is someone Adarsh wishes to follow and emulate.

Captaining Karnataka at the Sub-junior nationals that concluded last week in Rajgir, Bihar, Adarsh impressed the selectors with his performance despite his team failing to go past the Group B league phase. Playing as the centre-half, Adarsh turned out to be Karnataka's highest goal-scorer with five strikes during their two wins, a draw and a defeat.

Donning the skipper's role for the first time, Adarsh said that taking responsibility is a skill he learnt because of the hardships faced while growing up; he lost his father Govind three years ago due to health issues while his mother Sakamma is a daily-wage worker. Now, with Adarsh's steady climb -- which took him from the mud grounds of Gadag to the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports (DYES) sports hostel in Dharwad before landing on the hockey turf in Shantinagar, Bengaluru -- expectations from the youngster have swelled among his near and dear ones.

"Anil *kaka* (uncle) has been a constant support. After I moved to DYES Dharwad as an 11-year-old, coach Chandrashekar took good care of me. After my father's death, I barely went back home and stayed at the hostel. I moved to Bengaluru a year ago and my game has further improved under Vijay (Krishnan T) sir. Somebody has always helped me and I'm grateful to all of them. All the hard work and their belief in me is paying off," says Adarsh.

"Hockey changed my life for the better. I hope it will change Adrash's life too. Exactly a decade ago, I made it to the Sub-junior India camp. Hopefully, Adarsh will go beyond too," hopes cousin Harish, who was part of the Indian team that won the gold at the U-18 Asia Cup in 2016.

For feedback, email to dhsports @deccanherald.co.in

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Confident Bayern look to finish tricky Real job

Stuttering Arsenal hold slender advantage vs Sporting

MUNICH, AFP

Bayern Munich will be banking big on their talismanic keeper Manuel Neuer when they host Real Madrid in the second leg of the Champions League quarterfinal on Wednesday. REUTERS

LIVE 12:30 AM (THURSDAY) SONY SPORTS NETWORK

Bayern Munich veteran Manuel Neuer is saddling up for Wednesday's Real Madrid quarterfinal second leg at home in what could be his final season before riding off into the sunset.

Though not the risk-hungry, 'sweeper keeper' of his prime, the two-time Champions League winner was outstanding in Bayern's 2-1 first-leg victory in Madrid.

Named man of the match, Neuer made nine saves and succeeded in keeping Real's danger men Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Junior at bay, for the most part.

Neuer, who turned 40 in March, has a contract in Munich until the end of the season.

Bayern seem willing to offer their long-time 'keeper and captain another year, but Neuer has repeatedly said he is still weighing up his future.

The 2014 World Cup winner has struggled with muscle injuries in the past two seasons.

Normally the first name on the teamsheet, this campaign he has missed 11 games as he battles persistent calf muscle strains. Having already ruled himself out of World Cup contention this summer, ending the season with a third Champions League crown alongside a record-equalling 13th Bundesliga title would be a perfect sign-off.

While Bayern have always sat atop German football, Neuer's arrival alongside other modern greats including Thomas Mueller, Philipp Lahm and Bastian Schweinsteiger helped push the club into the stratosphere.

Bayern had never won more than three Bundesliga titles in a row before Neuer signed in 2011 but have only missed out twice in the 15 subsequent seasons.

Two of Bayern's six Champions League titles have come with Neuer between the sticks.

Heading into Wednesday's return leg, Neuer is the only current Bayern player to have experienced victory over two legs against Madrid. Since getting past the Spaniards in the 2012 semifinals, Bayern had not even won a match against Los Blancos in their eight meetings -- up until last week.

Pressure on Arsenal

Mikel Arteta has warned Arsenal that fatigue is no excuse for their damaging stumble as he urged his side to hit back by finishing off Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League quarterfinal second leg.

Chasing a second successive appearance in the semi-finals of Europe's elite club competition, Arsenal host Sporting on Wednesday with a 1-0 lead from last week's first-leg win in Lisbon.

But the Gunners go into the second leg in the midst of a bout of soul searching after losing three of their last four games in all competitions.

Levante edge past Getafe

VALENCIA, AP: Carlos Espi scored his seventh goal in six games as Levante beat Getafe 1-0 and moved off the bottom of La Liga.

The 20-year-old Espi had an early let off after eight minutes when the referee downgraded a red card to a yellow and he was decisive with eight minutes left when he stooped to head home the only goal.

Levante should have wrapped up the points more easily but Getafe goalkeeper David Soria saved two penalties, one from Adrián Dela after an hour and then again from Ivan Romero in stoppage time.

To make matters worse for Getafe, Zaid Romero was sent off in the dying seconds.

The result lifted Levante off the bottom of the table and continued a recent revival.

Leeds United's Noah Okafor celebrates after scoring against Manchester United on Monday. AFP

Okafor ends Leeds' 45-year wait for win at Old Trafford

MANCHESTER, AFP: Noah Okafor fired Leeds to a long-awaited 2-1 win over 10-man Manchester United at Old Trafford as the Premier League strugglers boosted their bid to avoid relegation on Monday.

Okafor punished United's sloppy defending with a brace in the first-half before Lisandro Martinez was sent off after pulling Dominic Calvert-Lewin's hair after the interval.

Casemiro got one back for United, but Leeds held on for their first win against United since a shock 2010 FA Cup success when they were in the third tier.

The Yorkshire club were able to celebrate their first top-flight win against United since 2002 and their first league victory at Old Trafford in 45 years.

A first win in seven league matches lifted Daniel Farke's side six points clear of the relegation zone, with six games left to preserve their top-flight status after last season's promotion.

As well as battling for survival, Leeds are through to the FA Cup semi-finals, where they face Chelsea at Wembley on April 26.

While Manchester City and Liverpool are United's main rivals, their fans' enmity with Leeds supporters goes back decades, featuring numerous clashes between hooligan gangs.

Amee marches into semifinals

BENGALURU, DHNS: India's Amee Kamani powered into the women's semifinals of the Asian Heyball Championships in Shah Alam, Malaysia, on Tuesday.

The Indore cueist scored a gritty 6-5 win over Tamami Okuda of Japan in the quarterfinals. Amee, a bronze medallist at the World Championships last year, takes on Waratthanun Sukritthanes of Thailand in the last-four stage clash on Wednesday.

Earlier, the left-handed Amee, who advanced through the losers' bracket, accounted for the hitherto unbeaten Keerthana Pandian 6-1 in the pre-quarterfinals.

Results (Indians unless mentioned): Men: Pre-quarters: Thor Chuan Leong (Mas) bt Shivam Arora 7-6; Sina Valizadeh (Irn) bt Ranveer Duggal 6-5.

Women: Quarters: Amee Kamani bt Tamami Okuda (Jpn) 6-5; Rhaki Constantino (Phi) bt Anupama Ramachandran 6-4.

Pre-quarters: Amee bt Keerthana Pandian 6-1; Anupama bt Natasha Chethan 6-4.

Ryan: A tale of joy amid Indian football mess

Australia-born player looking forward to striking it rich

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Ryan Williams (left) scored four minutes into his India debut against Hong Kong during AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Kochi last month.

It's hard for anyone to defend Indian football. What transpired during the much-delayed resumption of the top-tier league only exposed the fragile state of the game in the country.

For fans, that often means clinging to fleeting moments of joy. Australia-born Ryan Williams' goal four minutes into his long-awaited India debut was one such moment. However, much like the Indian football itself, his journey to that stage was anything but smooth.

Born in Perth to an Anglo-Indian mother and an English father, the Person of Indian Origin (PIO) was eligible for Indian citizenship but that path required him to renounce his Australian passport as Indian law does not permit dual citizenship.

Even then, eligibility was just the beginning; the process itself proved to be a battle and the case of Omid Singh serves as a reminder of how complicated it can get.

The Iranian PIO footballer, born to a Punjabi father in the Gulf, had publicly expressed his desire to represent India after being approached by former head coach Igor Stimac. However, the prolonged process of proving eligibility eventually forced him to walk away. Ryan, of course, faced similar hurdles.

"The journey I've been on to actually be able to be a citizen first and foremost of India, that path itself kind of gives me the shivers because it was not easy," Ryan tells *DH*. "Every time I got a phone call, I thought, 'Oh no! They're going to tell me it's not possible,' and they told me that so many times.

"The process was so tricky but that perseverance to push through and go and get something that I really wanted... the debut after that, it was all a bit surreal at the moment, to be honest."

It's worth noting that in the case of Omid, the Iranian winger didn't get the desired support from the club he was set to join and was later embroiled in a legal battle with them over the terms of their agreement. Ryan, on the other hand, had the chance to be familiar with the country since joining BFC in 2023 and had the club management backing him through thick and thin.

"The first person I had a conversation with from the club was Darren (Caldeira, director of football) and to this day we are very tight. To put it bluntly, without the club, none of this would have happened. There aren't many clubs that take a risk on a foreign winger," says Ryan.

That support has translated into stability on and off the pitch with 10 goals in 40 appearances for BFC. Ryan has now settled in Bengaluru, and that means cribbing about the city's infamous traffic like a local. But beyond personal comfort, his focus remains firmly on delivering for the fans.

"Since I joined here I have always heard that we have never won the shield... Hopefully we can change it this year and bring that gift to the fans. I know things are being said about the bench strength but we have enough quality to go all the way. The upcoming matches are crucial and will decide our season," concludes Ryan.

Mys Dist A champs

BENGALURU, DHNS

Sanika shone the brightest during Mysuru District A's 64-32 win over Beagles BC that helped her team clinch the 2nd State Women's Basketball League Championship title at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Tuesday.

Sanika scored 27 points while team-mate Mandara added another 11 in Mysuru's last semifinal league game that put them on top of the points table and subsequently finish as winners of the tournament.

In the other semifinal league match, Young Orion's SC defeated DYES Vidyanagar 74-31 to finish as the runners-up.

Kusma of Mysuru was adjudged the player of the tournament and Jeshtnavi of Young Orions took home the most promising player award.

Results (semifinal league matches): Mysuru District A: 64 (Sanika 27, Mandara 11) bt Beagles BC: 32 (Saanvi 11). HT: 33-20; Young Orion's SC: 74 (Jeshtnavi 16, Bindu 13) bt DYES Vidyanagar: 31 (Deepika 15, Ishitha 13). HT: 42-13. **Final Placings:** Mysore district A, 1; Young Orion's SC, 2; Beagles BC, 3; DYES Vidyanagar, 4.

Mysuru District A, winners of the 2nd State Women's Basketball League Championship in Bengaluru on Tuesday. STANDING (from left): Chandana, Apoorva, Sanika V, Girish B S (coach), Kusuma B L, Rakshitha Shetty, Madhushree M R. SQUATTING: Tejaswini, Sahana and Mandara Mithtre D L.
DH PHOTO/ B K JANARDHAN

Kahaan powers School of Cricket

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kahaan Halani's 97-run knock proved decisive as the School of Cricket edged CBT by four runs in the Tiger Cup U-14 tournament at the Altiore Sports Green Park Ground here on Tuesday.

LOCAL CRICKET

Brief scores: School of Cricket: 180/7 in 30 overs (Kahaan Halani 97, Advait Moharil 25) lt to CBT: 176/8 in 30 overs (Partha Bn 65, Aarav 41, Partha Bn 4-9).
Herons: 129/9 in 30 overs (Nikhil Jayaram 52, Aadithya 3-11) lt to Play Smart 133/6 in 28.2 overs (Mahin Srikanth 48, Aryavir Kiran 27, Samvrith Kulkarni 3-18).
Magadi CC: 108 all out in 26.4 overs (Hanvith 27, Kriday 3-6, Panav Chawla 3-26) lt to Kreeda Kshetra: 110/2 in 13.2 overs (Kriday 36, Luvik 35).
Panthers: 160/5 in 30 overs (Sachin T 80, Mohammed Hamza 46) lt to RKO3: 164/4 in 28.1 overs (Yathin R Gowda 66, Jeet D 3-27).

SC Bengaluru down table-toppers United SC

BENGALURU, DHNS: SC Bengaluru posted their first win of the I-League 2 season as they defeated table toppers United SC 2-0 at the Dravid-Padukone Centre of Excellence here on Tuesday.

Goals by Chanambam Samananda Singh (29th minute) and Devadath S (40th) sealed the victory over a tricky Kolkata outfit, who held Bengaluru United to a 1-1 draw at the same venue last week.

Sporting Goa moved in the joint lead on the day as they defeated visiting Sudeva Delhi via a solitary goal by Alister Anthony in the 73rd minute to break the deadlock. This was second defeat for Sudeva in three matches and have dropped to the bottom place.

Devadath also joined the golden boot race with the goal as the No. 10 had scored in the season opener in a 3-3 draw against GMSC in Mumbai.

Devadath S

The victory puts the 2023-24 champions fourth on the points table with five points from three matches while United (still at first with 7 points from 4 matches) stay in joint lead with Delhi FC (7 from 3) and Sporting Goa (7 from 4).

More Bengaluru action continues in the league on Wednesday as FCBU host Manipur's NEROCA FC, who will face SCB on Monday (April 20).

Result: SC Bengaluru: 2 (Samananda Singh 29th, Devadath S 40th).

Indians dominate Wisden Almanack honours

LONDON, PTI

Indian cricketers dominated the Wisden Almanack honours, securing seven of the nine awards, with Deepti Sharma and Abhishek Sharma leading the way after being named Women's Cricketer of the Year and T20 Cricketer of the Year respectively.

Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja were named among Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year, following their exploits in last year's Test series in England.

The only non-Indian winners were premier Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was named Men's Cricketer in the World, and England batter Haseeb Hameed, who was also included among the Five Cricketers of the Year.

Deepti Sharma

Deepti earned the honour after emerging as the top-wicket taker in last year's ICC Women's ODI World Cup with 22 wickets. The all-rounder's effort helped India land their maiden global title, beating South Africa in the final in Mumbai. She also made 215 runs from nine matches with three fifties.

Abhishek had a breakout 2025 season, scoring 859 runs from 21 matches at an awesome strike-rate of 193 with a hundred and five fifties.

India's Test skipper Gill was in prolific form during the English summer, scoring 754 runs, which played a crucial role in India securing a 2-2 draw in the five-match series. Notably, he amassed 430 runs in the Edgbaston Test alone.

Hyderabad fast bowler Siraj was the top wicket-taker in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy series, taking 23 scalps. While Pant made 479 runs before an injury that he suffered in the fourth Test forced him to sit out of the fifth match.

He braved a toe fracture to score a 54 in the second innings at Manchester.

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IPL 2026

10 TEAMS 13 VENUES 58 DAYS 74 MATCHES

"Every player hopes for a debut like this, so it feels really good. I'm very happy. The bowling coach Varun (Aaron) bhai informed me a day before the game that I would be playing.

SAQIB HUSSAIN, SRH BOWLER

Riyan Parag

RR undone by mix of variables against SRH, says Parag

HYDERABAD, PTI: Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag said his team's first IPL defeat of the season was caused by a combination of factors, including his usually explosive batters' inability to read the pace of deliveries against Sunrisers Hyderabad here.

After an underwhelming display with the ball, it was a rare collective failure of Rajasthan's explosive top order, comprising Yashasvi Jaiswal, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Dhruv Jurel as SRH handed the Royals' a 57-run hammering here on Monday.

"I think it was a mix of everything. I felt we were a little surprised by what the pace of the ball was when it left the hand and how it came off the wicket," Parag said at the post match press conference.

"...I think Vaibhav expected it a little quicker, came a little stickier. Same for Dhruv, nipped back in. Jaiswal, he hits that 9 out of 10 times and that stopped."

Parag, who has taken over the RR captaincy this season, felt the bowlers also came up short in execution despite having the required quality.

CSK feast on wounded KKR

Noor spins a web around Kolkata as Chennai win second game on the bounce

CHENNAI, PTI

Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL season just went from bad to worse with Chennai Super Kings demolishing them by 32 runs on a tricky surface, exposing head coach Abhishek Nayar's poor planning and skipper Ajinkya Rahane's archaic approach here on Tuesday.

On a two-paced track, CSK, after a blazing Powerplay that fetched them 72 runs, managed a decent 192 for five, which was 20 short of par but proved to be good enough to outclass KKR, who were stopped at 160 for seven in the allotted 20 overs.

Rahane's team lost wickets in a clutch as left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmad (3/21 in 4 overs) wreaked havoc, blowing away the middle-order to ensure an easy win.

On a pitch where the ball gripped, Noor was more than a handful as he removed Rahane, Rinku Singh (6) and Cameron Green (0), as KKR slumped from 79 for two to 90 for six. Left-arm spinner Akeal Hossain (1/26 in 4 overs) was also more than decent, keeping batters in check.

Rahane (28 off 22 balls) and Raghuvanshi (27 off 19 balls) adding 50 runs in just over five overs was an eyesore, as their approach was reminiscent of how batters chased this kind of target a decade ago. Mumbai men Rahane and Raguvanshi, batting in the KKR top-four, has proven to be an unmitigated disaster for the Shah Rukh Khan-owned side, which has now lost four out of the first five games.

Meanwhile, CSK are back on track with two wins.

Rahane was unhappy when asked about his Powerplay batting, but his age-old weakness against slow bowlers was exploited wonderfully by CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad. But credit should also go to pacers Anshul Kamboj and Khaleel Ahmed as they removed the two players, who could have made the chase look easy -- Finn Allen (1) and Sunil Narine (24 off 17 balls).

Another couple of impactful players, Rovman Powell (31 off 22) and Ramandeep Singh (35 n.o. off 23), entered the fray quite late, and the damage was already done.

Earlier, after Sanju Samson (48 off 32 balls) and Ayush Mhatre (38 off 17 balls) took CSK's score to 72 for 2 at the end of Powerplay.

Chennai Super Kings' Noor Ahmad (centre) celebrates after dismissing Kolkata Knight Riders' Ajinkya Rahane at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Tuesday. PTI

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: Sanju Samson b Tyagi 48, Ruturaj Gaikwad c Powell b Roy 7, Ayush Mhatre c Ramandeep b Arora 38, Dewald Brevis c Arora b Tyagi 41, Sarfaraz Khan b Narine 23, Shivam Dube (not out) 13, Jamie Overton (not out) 7. Extras (LB-4, W-11) 15. **TOTAL (for 5 wkts, 20 overs) 192.**

Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-72, 3-111, 4-162, 5-171. **Bowling:** Vaibhav Arora 4-0-55-1, Cameron Green 2-0-30-0, Anukul Roy 3-0-21-1, Sunil Narine 4-0-21-1, Varun Chakravarthy 3-0-26-0, Kartik Tyagi 4-0-35-2.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: Finn Allen c Dube b Kamboj 1, Sunil Narine c Gurjapneet Singh b Khaleel 24, Ajinkya Rahane c Gaikwad b Noor 28, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Brevis b Hosein 27, Rinku Singh c Dube b Noor 6, Cameron Green b Noor 0, Rovman Powell (not out) 31, Ramandeep Singh c Sarfaraz b Kamboj 35, Anukul Roy (not out) 1. Extras (LB-2, W-5) 7. **TOTAL (for 7 wkts, 20 overs) 160.**

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-29, 3-79, 4-85, 5-85, 6-90, 7-153. **Bowling:** Khaleel Ahmed 3.5-0-24-1, Anshul Kamboj 4-0-32-2, Akeal Hosein 4-0-26-1, Noor Ahmad 4-0-21-3, Gurjapneet Singh 1.1-0-23-0, Jamie Overton 3-0-32-0.

Result: CSK won by 32 runs.

PoM: Noor Ahmad

Manifestation turns into reality for Hinge

HYDERABAD, PTI

"I wrote it down somewhere that I could take four or five wickets on debut," said Sunrisers Hyderabad's Praful Hinge **(in pic)** (4/34) after a historic outing against Rajasthan Royals in the IPL on Monday.

The Vidarbha pacer turned his manifestation into reality with a sensational three-wicket first over burst that effectively dismantled the table-toppers' chase of 217 before it even began.

Hinge ran through RR's in-form top order in a stunning opening spell of 2-0-6-4 which paved the way for SRH's massive win by 57 runs and first defeat in five matches for the visitors.

"I had written this somewhere that I will take 4-5 wickets on my debut. I thought of dominating the powerplay. I believe in it (manifestation)," Hinge told the broadcaster after the match.

"At the age of 13, I started cricket. Did not know what leather ball cricket was. Asked my father to join a club. But he said I was too young. Then he just took me there, and I kept playing after it. Want to dedicate this award to my family."

Hinge claimed he had told his teammates that he would dismiss RR's Vaibhav Sooryavanshi off a bouncer.

"I had told people that I would bowl a bouncer to him and get him out. I just wanted to get him out. Varun bhai (our bowling coach) helped me plan it, so thank you," he said.

Hinge's four-for was accompanied by a fine spell by another debutant pacer Sakib Hussain, who claimed 4/24.

"Every player hopes for a debut like this, so it feels really good. I'm very happy. The (SRH) bowling coach informed me a day before the game that I would be playing. From then on, my focus was simply on performing well. Mentally, I prepared myself to give my best," Hussain said.

"Varun (Aaron) bhai has been working with me for the past four years. Whatever improvement you see in my bowling is because of him. I give him full credit," he added.

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	NR	Pts	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	5	4	1	0	8	0.889
Punjab Kings	4	3	0	1	7	0.720
Royal Challengers	4	3	1	0	6	1.148
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	2	3	0	4	0.576
Delhi Capitals	4	2	2	0	4	0.322
Gujarat Titans	4	2	2	0	4	-0.029
Lucknow Super Giants	4	2	2	0	4	-0.427
Chennai Super Kings	5	2	3	0	4	-0.846
Mumbai Indians	4	1	3	0	2	-0.772
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	0	4	1	1	-1.383

IPL BRIEF

PSL bans Muzarabani for choosing IPL

▸ Blessing Muzarabani has been handed a two-year ban by the Pakistan Super League after the Zimbabwe pacer chose to play the IPL while having a deal with a PSL franchise, reports PTI from Lahore.

Muzarabani was signed as a replacement player for Islamabad United but he decided to withdraw from PSL after being approached by Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL.

Madushanka in for injured Carse

▸ Sri Lankan pacer Dilshan Madushanka on Tuesday replaced injured Brydon Carse in the Sunrisers Hyderabad squad for the remainder of Indian Premier League, reports PTI from New Delhi.

Carse had suffered a hand injury in the nets ahead of their IPL opener against RCB last month. England pacer Carse last played in the Ashes back in January.

Chinnaswamy could be the tonic that LSG need, feels Moody

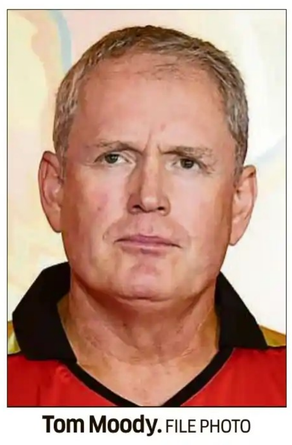
VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

Lucknow Super Giants' Global Director of Cricket Tom Moody hoped the usually high-scoring M Chinnaswamy Stadium surface could be the perfect "tonic" that is needed for the under-firing LSG top-order to regain their explosive touch.

LSG's power-packed batting-line up consisting international T20 captains in Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram, the flamboyant Rishabh Pant and the explosive Nicholas Pooran have rendered ineffective while getting restricted to 141 all out against Delhi Capitals and 164/8 against Gujarat Titans.

In their game against Kolkata Knight Riders, they needed a 21-year-old unheralded Mukul Choudhary to do the heavy-lifting, underlining their poor returns at the top.

"I'm sure that the opportunity tomorrow night at a venue where batting can be something that players can enjoy, the size of the ground, the surface, could well be the tonic that the top-order needs," Moody told reporters on the eve of the game.



Tom Moody. FILE PHOTO

"We know this venue does tend to go over 200 on a regular basis. Tomorrow night is a great opportunity for all our batters that haven't had the consistency of the start of the season they'd like," he added.

Nicholas Pooran enjoyed his best IPL season in 2025, smashing 489 runs at a strike rate of 196.25 and averaging 43.67. However, the southpaw has not had a desirable start to his IPL campaign this season and with the Rs 21 crore price tag, his stint has come under scrutiny.

However, Moody backed the destructive middle-order bat despite his initial hiccups.

"Obviously Nicky (Pooran) is fully aware of the slow start he's had. We've got absolutely 100% confidence in what he brings to the table. As I say, class is permanent."

The 60-year-old Moody also lauded the efforts of Mohammed Shami while crediting his leadership qualities in spearheading a young and talented bowling attack.

"No surprise to see him (Shami) do as well as he's done so far. As we know he's a world-class bowler. He's come off a very good domestic season. He looks fit and strong. What makes him good is his durability.

"He's got great wisdom and leadership characteristics and he's bringing all that to the table for us."

Trust the process

RCB pacer Rasikh Dar relished the opportunity of playing an IPL game after a while and attributed it to hard work behind the scenes.

"I was playing an IPL game after a while, but the process remained the same. The work we've put in over the last year was about preparing for match situations, and in the last game, I focused on executing my plans,' said Rasikh.

B'luru readies for a night of fireworks

Red-hot Challengers host inconsistent Super Giants today

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

A rampaging Royal Challengers Bengaluru will host an erring Lucknow Super Giants in what seems to be a battle of contrasts at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Wednesday.

With skipper Rajat Patidar, Phil Salt, Jitesh Sharma, Mitchell Marsh and Nicholas Pooran taking turns to clobber sidearm specialists on either side of the main strip, and another belter of a surface expected, the game has all the ingredients of a high-scoring affair.

The match will be played on the same surface as the RCB-CSK game, pitch No. 6, which saw 457 runs being scored, confirmed one of the groundstaff to *DH*.

The Challengers' onslaught has been unrelenting and they have been on a six-hitting spree, smashing 54 in the tournament so far.

Salt might not have had a great year so far, but RCB would be pleased that the destructive Englishman is back doing what he does best: cause serious damage which he did with a 36-ball 78 against Mumbai Indians.

RCB's Virat Kohli (right) and LSG's Rishabh Pant share a light moment during a training session at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/ PRASHANTH HG

LIVE 7:30 PM

At the heart of RCB's success has been their batting. However, from an Indian perspective, there's been an extra buzz around skipper Patidar and talks about him competing for the No.3/No. 4 national T20 spots are slowly gaining weight.

The 32-year-old has taken his batting to another level this year, smashing 18 sixes in four games, and will hope to add to his reputation against LSG.

A contest with the makings of a classic is that of Virat Kohli versus Mohammed Shami. While Kohli has been at slip or short covers to Shami in Indian colours and has played him plenty of times in the nets, this promises a good contest.

While Kohli did not take the field during Mumbai's chase in RCB's last outing, the 37-year-old batted on the eve of the game.

On the bowling front, Jacob Duffy has done a good job as Josh Hazlewood's back-up, and there could be a temptation to play both the quicks, keeping Romario Shephard out, if the Australian is match fit.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Krunal Pandya, Suyash Sharma and Rasikh Dar have been going about their business fairly well on tracks that have been batting-friendly.

On the other hand, Super Giants were among the formidable sides in the first two years of their establishment, even making the play-offs twice under KL Rahul, before their performances began to taper off. Since then, they have had two seventh-place finishes.

One of their biggest worries has been Rishabh Pant's batting, as the flamboyant wicket-keeper-bat has managed just 103 runs in four games and 372 runs since the 2025 season.

The likes of Aiden Markram, Mitchell Marsh and Nicholas Pooran have blown hot and cold, adding to the concerns as they have managed just four points from four games.

With the likes of Shami and young Indian talent, they will have their task cut out against a well-oiled RCB at a stadium that has witnessed 200-plus scores being scored 37 times in IPL.

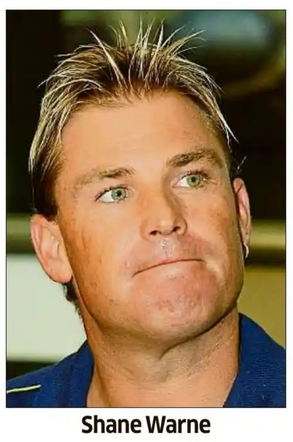
'Covid vaccines caused my dad's death'

SYDNEY, PTI

Four years after Shane Warne's death left the cricketing world in shock, his son Jackson has asserted that the spin legend's demise was probably caused by the "three or four" Covid-vaccines that he was "forced to take for work."

Speaking on '2 Worlds Collide podcast', Jackson, however, also acknowledged that his father underlying health issues. Warne was 52 when he died in Thailand in 2022 after suffering a heart attack.

"I definitely think that it (Covidvaccine) was involved. I don't even think saying that is controversial anymore. Even if dad had underlying health issues, I think this brought it out right to the surface and that's one thing that I've always struggled with," Jackson said.



Shane Warne

"My first impression, as soon as I hung up the phone (after receiving the news of Warne's death), I instantly blamed the government. I instantly blamed Covid and the vaccine."

Jackson said he barely managed to stop himself from vocalising his exact thoughts at the memorial service.

"It was probably smart I didn't, I would be in a very different position if I did. But that was how I felt," Jackson said.

"Yes, a lot of people were dying of heart attacks before. But dad was okay, I think he might have got three or four (vaccine doses), he didn't want to get them, he was forced to get them for work. He was forced to get them like everybody else," he asserted.

"...I try not to think about it too much because all that does is fester into anger. That anger is not good for anybody," he added.

Sindarov to face Gukesh for World title

PAPHOS (CYPRUS), PTI

Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali stayed in contention for the top prize by drawing with China's Zhongyi Tan, even as Bibisara Assaubayeva blew the title race wide open with a splendid victory over Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk in the penultimate round of women's Candidates Chess.

Uzbekistan's 20-year-old Javokhir Sindarov won the open section with a round to spare as Anish Giri of Holland could not dent his confidence in what has perhaps been the greatest performance in the history of Candidates.

Sindarov, on 9.5 points, is already crowned the champion, earning the right to challenge India's D Gukesh for the World Chess Championship title later this year. Sindarov still enjoys a healthy two-point lead over nearest rival Giri.

Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov won the Candidates Chess Tournament with a game to spare to set up the World Championship title clash with India's D Gukesh. X

On a day that featured four draws, R Praggnandhaa also made a truce with Fabiano Caruana of the United States and the Indian remained on the seventh spot in the eight-player tournament.

Vaishali in joint lead

The women's section is hugely crowded at the top with Vaishali leading on 7.5 points with Assaubayeva. The Kazakh girl has been in great form in the last couple of games and it remains to be seen if she can replicate in the last remaining round.

Meanwhile Aleksandra Goryachkina came up with a splendid effort to beat Jiner Zhu of China.

Vaishali will take on Kateryna Lagno in her 14th and final round game on Wednesday while Bibisara has to tackle Divya Deshmukh.

Results (round 13): Wei Yi (Chn, 6) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 5); Anish Giri (Ned, 7.5) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 9.5); Hikaru Nakamura (US, 6) drew with Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 6); Fabiano Caruana (US, 6.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5.5).

Women: Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 7.5) bt Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 6.5); Kateryna Lagno (Rus, 6.5) bt Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 5); Tan Zhongyi (Chn, 5.5) drew with R Vaishali (Ind, 7.5); Zhu Jiner (Chn, 7) lt to Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus, 6.5).

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Lucknow Super Giants **(7:30 pm). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

Champions League (Quarter Finals Leg 2): Bayern Munich vs Real Madrid, Arsenal vs Sporting CP **(both 12:30 am, Thursday). LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, SonyLIV.**

TENNIS

ATP 500 Barcelona Open: Round of 16 **(5:30 pm). LIVE** on **FanCode.**

Vinicius Jr will be key for Real Madrid when they take on Bayern Munich.

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